

STARS AND STRIPES.®

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Actor Christopher Walken



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Boston's Denek Lowe

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2004

General: U.S. geared for Fallujah assault

British reach base near Baghdad, freeing up American troops Page 3

Candidates rally star power in final stretch Page 9



Clockwise from far left: Democratic presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry embraces singer Bruce Springsteen after Springsteen performed at a campaign rally at Ohio State University on Thursday.

President Bush waves to supporters after speaking at a campaign rally early Friday in Manchester, N.H. Bush was scheduled to fly to Ohio for more stumping later on Friday.



Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger joins Stockton Mayor Gary Podesta, standing right, in visiting diners at Murillo's Mexican Food in Vacaville, Calif., on Tuesday. Schwarzenegger planned to campaign at a rally with President Bush in Ohio on Friday afternoon.

AP photos

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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Rosa Parks guardian: A federal judge again refused to reconsider the appointment of former Mayor Dennis Archer as guardian for 91-year-old civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks.

U.S. District Judge George Steeh appointed Archer earlier this month to protect Parks' interests in a pair of civil lawsuits.

Parks' doctors have told a federal magistrate that she is in poor health and suffers from dementia.

Parks sued the rap group OutKast in 1999, claiming they wrongly used her name in the title of a song. A second lawsuit filed in August seeks more than \$5 billion from the group's record companies and two major booksellers.

Parks' lawyers had argued that their client already has people acting on her behalf. Steeh on Thursday refused for the second time to reconsider the appointment.

Church sexual abuse: A California judge ordered the employment records of Roman Catholic priests accused of sexual abuse in dozens of civil cases be kept confidential — an apparent reversal from an earlier recommendation that they be made public.

The records could reveal what actions dioceses took against priests accused of sexual molestation, including transferring them between parishes rather than removing them from ministry or turning them over to law enforcement.

Attorneys for the church argued priests' personnel records, as well as personal information related to the alleged victims, should remain confidential during the discovery phase of the various sex-abuse civil cases.

NAACP tax status: The Internal Revenue Service has threatened to revoke the NAACP's tax-exempt status because the group's chairman, Julian Bond, "condemned the administration policies of George W. Bush" during a speech this summer, according to documents the civil rights group provided Thursday.

The NAACP, which is based in Baltimore and is the nation's oldest and largest civil rights organization, is incorporated under a tax-code section that prohibits participation in a political campaign.

Harris assault: A man charged with assault for allegedly aiming his car at Florida Rep. Katherine Harris and supporters while they were campaigning was ordered held Thursday on \$500,000 bail.

Barry M. Seltzer, 46, faces one count of aggravated assault with a deadly weapon and could face a federal charge in connection with the Tuesday incident.

Seltzer told police he was exercising "political expression" when he aimed his car at Harris and campaign supporters as they stood at a busy intersection. He swerved onto the sidewalk; no one was hurt.

Mailbox bombings case: A Minnesota man accused in a Midwestern mailboxes bombing spree is mentally ill and should be committed, a federal magistrate judge ruled Thursday.

Lucas Helder, 23, already had been declared incompetent to stand trial on charges that he planted pipe bombs and anti-government notes in rural mailboxes in Iowa, Illinois, Nebraska, Colorado and Texas in May 2002.

Several bombs exploded, injuring four



Terror trial: Militant cleric Abu Bakar Bashir, center, prepares to step out of detention car upon arrival for his trial at a makeshift court in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Thursday. Bashir is accused in the 2002 Bali bombings and last year's attack on the J.W. Marriott Hotel in Jakarta.

postal workers and two Iowa women. The nationwide manhunt that followed ended with Helder's arrest outside Reno, Nev.

U.S. Magistrate Judge Franklin Noel said he was convinced by expert testimony that Helder, who is in jail, might do more bombings given the chance.

Swift Boat investigation: A federal employee union is calling for an investigation into why the Waco Veterans Affairs Regional Office held a training session led by a former President Bush campaign political volunteer linked to the Swift Boat Veterans for Truth.

The American Federation of Government Employees, which has endorsed Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry, says retired Air Force Col. Ken Cordier's appearance violated a law that bans political activities at federal workplaces.

Several Waco VA employees said that before the training session last month, their boss told them Cordier would not discuss politics, said the union's attorney, Mark Roth. But after his presentation on POW issues, Cordier made disparaging remarks about Democrats that made employees of both political parties feel uncomfortable, Roth said.

McGreevey aide interviewed: More than two months after Gov. James E. McGreevey said he would resign in the wake of an extra-marital gay affair, federal investigators have interviewed the former aide who was reported to have been the man he had the affair with.

Two FBI agents interviewed Glenn Cipel in his native Israel "at length" on Wednesday, FBI spokesman Steve Kodak said Thursday.

Kodak said he could not comment on the content of the interview.

descendants of the HMS Bounty mutineers, British authorities in New Zealand said Friday.

Steve Christian, who claims to be a direct descendant of Bounty mutiny leader Fletcher Christian, and five other men from the island were convicted Monday of a string of rapes and sex attacks dating back 40 years. Christian was convicted of five rapes.

Ukraine election: In a sharp statement of dismay over abuses and official interference ahead of Sunday's presidential election, U.S. officials say Ukraine could face unspecified punitive measures if the vote is not free and fair.

"If the election fails to meet international standards, a variety of measures to hold officials responsible for electoral misconduct accountable will be considered," the U.S. mission to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe said in a statement released last Thursday.

Japan earthquake: The death toll attributed to a series of powerful earthquakes in northern Japan over the past week rose to 36 on Friday, after a 43-year-old woman who had been camping in her car died from a blood clot, police said.

A 6.8-magnitude earthquake last Saturday injured more than 2,000 people and left some 100,000 living in temporary public shelters unable to return home. Thousands more have been camping out in tents and cars, afraid that aftershocks could set off landslides or cause already-damaged buildings to collapse.

A Niigata Prefectural Police official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the woman from Ojiya city was hospitalized Wednesday morning after collapsing outside her car. She had been sleeping in the car after finding nearby shelters full, he said.

Stories and photos from wire reports



Seltzer



McGreevey

World

Pitcairn island rapes: The mayor of Pitcairn Island was sentenced to three years imprisonment for rapes of young women on the remote and isolated home of

British troops arrive to free up Americans

With replacements in place, U.S. soldiers prepare for Fallujah assault

By MARIAM FAM
The Associated Press

BAGHDAD — U.S. forces are gearing up for a major operation against the insurgent stronghold Fallujah, a U.S. general said Friday, as hundreds of British troops reached a base near Baghdad to free American forces to join any assault.

"We're gearing up to do an operation and when we're told to go, we'll go," Brig. Gen. Dennis Hejlik, deputy commander of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, said at a camp near Fallujah. "When we do go, we'll whack them."

Hejlik's comments confirmed that plans are under way for a major assault on insurgent strongholds west of Baghdad in an effort to end the wave of car bombings, kidnappings and attacks that has escalated since Fallujah fell under guerrilla control last spring.

U.S. officials have given no indication of the timing of a major attack, which still await final orders from Iraqi Prime Minister Ayad Allawi. However, in a sign that the assault may be imminent, the first wave of troops from the Black Watch regiment has arrived at the base near Baghdad, the Defense Ministry in London.

The rest of the 850-strong battle group from the Black Watch regiment were to arrive over the weekend, the ministry said without specifying how many were in each wave. The base is located 20 miles west of Mahmudiya, a town that has seen frequent insurgent attacks south of Baghdad, according to the reports.

Americans asked for the deployment in order to free up American forces for a new assault on Sunni insurgents who have taken control of Fallujah and a number of towns north and west of Baghdad.

Clashes were reported Friday on the northeast edge of Fallujah and in Ramadi — an almost daily occurrence as the showdown with the insurgents looms.

The decision to press to the U.S. request for redeployment is a politically sensitive one for Prime Minister Tony Blair, whose popularity has plummeted because of his support for the Iraq war.

A first convoy of troops and heavy equipment arrived at the base, known as Camp



David McBride of the British Black Watch regiment waits for takeoff as he sits aboard a Hercules C-130 transport aircraft at Basra Airport in Iraq on Thursday. The Black Watch battle group, with attachments from 40 Commando Royal Marines, B Squadron Queen's Dragoon Guards and support from other units, will be operating near Baghdad.

Dogwood, by land Thursday, slowed by roadside bombs along the way.

A blast went off 10 miles south of the base as the convoy passed, forcing several trucks off the road but causing no casualties, according to a pool report by a Daily Express correspondent embedded with the convoy. More bombs were discovered and defused.

Sixty-eight British soldiers have been killed in Iraq, compared to more than 1,100 American troops.

Black Watch soldiers have been told by their commanders that their deployment will be for a maximum of 30 days. Officials have refused to say which, if any, regiment might replace them.

"I'm nervous and angry," said Pvt. Manny Lynch, 19, of the Black Watch, according to the Daily Express pool report. "I was supposed to be going home last Monday and I only found out that I was being deployed four days before."

In other violence Friday, two car bombs in the northern city of Mosul targeted two U.S. patrols, killing an Iraqi civilian and lightly wounding five U.S. soldiers, according to the U.S. military and hospital officials.

A Turkish truck carrying bottled water also was attacked in the city, 225 miles northwest of Baghdad, killing the driver and leaving the vehicle engulfed in flames, according to witnesses and Mosul police.

In Baquba, Aqil Hamid al-Adili, an assistant to the governor of Diyala province, was killed by gunmen as he was sitting in a friend's office, according to police Lt. Hussein Ali.

Days earlier, al-Adili had warned of insurgent infiltration in the Iraqi security forces after a deadly ambush in which 50 U.S.-trained Iraqi soldiers were killed near the Iran border last weekend.

In Japan, the government struggled Fri-

U.S. deaths in Iraq

The Associated Press

As of Thursday, at least 1,111 members of the U.S. military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press count. At least 947 died as a result of hostile action, according to the Defense Department. The figures include three military civilians.

The AP count is five higher than the Defense Department's tally, last updated Thursday at 10 a.m.

The British military has reported 67 deaths: Italy, 19; Poland, 13; Spain, 11; Ukraine, nine; Bulgaria, seven; Slovakia, three; Estonia, Thailand and the Netherlands, two each; and Denmark, El Salvador, Hungary and Latvia have reported one death each.

Since May 1, 2003, when President Bush declared that major combat operations in Iraq had ended, 973 U.S. military members have died, according to AP's count. That includes at least 738 deaths resulting from hostile action, according to the military's numbers.

The latest death reported by the military:

■ A U.S. soldier was killed in a rocket-propelled grenade attack Thursday while on patrol south of Balad, Iraq.

■ A U.S. soldier was killed in an explosion Thursday while on patrol in Baghdad.

The latest identification reported by the military:

■ No identifications reported.

day to track down a Japanese hostage in Iraq, as the deadline passed for it to comply with the demands of militants who threatened to behead him.

An al-Qaeda-linked group led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi vowed on Tuesday to kill Shosha Koda within 48 hours unless Japan withdrew its troops from Iraq. Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi rejected that demand.

U.S. seeks to account for movement of munitions

By JOHN J. LUMPKIN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — An Army unit removed 250 tons of ammunition from the Al-Qaqa weapons depot in Iraq in April 2003 and later destroyed it, the company's former commander said Friday. A Pentagon spokesman said some of the same type as the missing explosives that have become a major issue in the presidential campaign.

But those 250 tons were not located under the seal of the International Atomic Energy Agency — as the missing high-grade explosives had been — and Pentagon spokesman Larry Di Rita could not definitely say whether they were part of the missing 377 tons.

Maj. Austin Pearson, speaking at a press conference at the Pentagon, said his team removed 250 tons of TNT, plastic explosives, detonation cords, and white phosphorus rounds on April 13, 2003 — 10 days after U.S. forces first reached the Al-Qaqa site.

"I did not see any IAEA seals at any of the locations we went into. I was not looking for that," Pearson said.

Di Rita sought to point to Pearson's comments as evidence that some RDX, one of

Major says company removed 250 tons of ammunition from Iraq depot in question

the high-energy explosives, might have been removed from the site. RDX also is known as plastic explosive.

But Di Rita acknowledged, "I can't say RDX that was on the list of IAEA is what the major pulled out. ... We believe that some of the things they were pulling out of there were RDX."

Further study was needed, Di Rita said.

Whether Saddam Hussein's forces removed the explosives before U.S. forces arrived on April 3, 2003, or whether they fell into the hands of looters and insurgents afterward — because the site was not guarded by U.S. troops — has become a key issue in the campaign.

Still, 377 tons of explosives amount to a tiny fraction of the weaponry in Iraq. U.S. forces already have destroyed, or have slated to destroy, more than 400,000 tons of all manner of Iraqi weapons and ammunition. But at least another 250,000 tons from Sad-

dam's regime remain unaccounted for, and some undoubtedly has fallen into the hands of insurgents.

The window in which the explosives most likely were removed from Al-Qaqa begins on March 15, 2003 — five days before the war started — and ends in late May, when a U.S. weapons inspection team declared the depot stripped and looted.

Two weeks ago, Iraqi officials told the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency that the explosives vanished as a result of "theft and looting ... due to lack of security."

The explosives were known to be housed in storage bunkers at the sprawling Al-Qaqa complex and nearby structures. U.N. nuclear inspectors placed fresh seals over the bunker doors in January 2003. The inspectors visited Al-Qaqa for the last time that March 15 and reported that the seals were not broken, concluding the weapons still were inside at the time.

A U.S. military reconnaissance image, taken of Al-Qaqa on March 17, shows two vehicles, presumably Iraqi, outside a bunker at Al-Qaqa. But Di Rita said that a bunker was not known to contain any of the 377 tons, and that the image only shows that there was activity at the depot after U.S. inspectors left.

Elements of the U.S. 3rd Infantry Division arrived in the area on April 3 en route to Baghdad. They fought a battle with Iraqi forces inside Al-Qaqa, and some are now leaving a battalion behind to clear out enemy fighters in the area. Troops found enemy weapons, including artillery shells, on the base, he said. They didn't specifically search for the 377 tons of high explosives that are missing. On April 6, the battalion left for Baghdad.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and others have advanced the theory that the materials were removed before U.S. forces arrived, saying looting that much material would have been done by small-scale thieves, and that a large-scale theft would have involved lots of trucks and would have been detected.

Are these explosives worth the loss?

377 tons is just a fraction of the Iraq munitions that are missing

By BRADLEY GRAHAM
AND THOMAS E. RICKS

The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The 377 tons of Iraqi explosives whose reported disappearance has dominated the past few days of presidential campaigning represent only a tiny fraction of the vast quantities of other munitions unaccounted for since the fall of Saddam Hussein's government 18 months ago. U.S. military commanders estimated last fall that Iraqi military sites contained 650,000 to 1 million tons of explosives, artillery shells, aviation bombs and other armaments. The Bush administration cited official figures this week showing about 400,000 tons destroyed or in the process of being eliminated. That leaves the whereabouts of more than 250,000 tons unknown.

Against that background, this week's assertions by Sen. John Kerry's campaign about the few hundred tons said to have vanished from Iraq's Al-Qaqa facility have struck some defense experts as exaggerated.

"There is something truly absurd about focusing on 377 tons of rather ordinary explosives, regardless of what actually happened at Al-Qaqa," Anthony H. Cordesman, a senior analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, wrote in an assessment Thursday. "The munitions at Al-Qaqa were at most around 0.66 percent of the total."

Retired Army Gen. Wayne Downing, who served briefly as President Bush's adviser on counterterrorism and has criticized some aspects of the administration's performance, said Thursday he considered the missing-explosives issue "bogus."

Kerry has seized on the incident to press his charge that Bush mishandled the invasion of Iraq, failing, among other things, to secure sites containing dangerous Iraqi munitions, some of which were stored in bunkers marked with International Atomic Energy Agency seals to designate particular international concern.

Bush administration officials have refused to accept a statement issued earlier this month by a senior official of Iraq's interim government that the munitions disappeared after the April 9, 2003, fall of Baghdad "due to a lack of security." Iraqi authorities have not offered any supporting evidence.

Several defense analysts said Kerry's focus on Al-Qaqa has resonated mainly because the explosives issue has become symbolic of the Bush administration's handling of Iraq, especially its long-running insistence that it has an insufficient number of U.S. forces there.

The issue has been out there for a long time," said James Bodner, who helped formulate Iraq policy in the Clinton-era Pentagon. "Are we properly managed to carry out the specific military tasks that need to be accomplished? If the answer is 'Yes, we have enough troops,' then why are these facilities unguarded?"

Whatever the case, the military significance of the loss, in a country awash with far larger amounts of munitions, is open to question.

The most powerful of the three explosives, the MXM — can be used in a trigger for nuclear devices — which is why it has been placed under IAEA seal. But MXM is obtainable elsewhere, and the chief U.S.



This satellite image collected Sept. 7 shows part of Al-Qaqa west facility in south Baghdad. Nearly 400 tons of conventional explosives have disappeared from the al-Qaqa military installation, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

ANALYSIS

weapons investigator in Iraq, Charles Duelfer, has acknowledged that the Iraqi stockpile posed no particular concern in this regard.

Matthew Bunn, a Harvard University expert in nuclear weapons and terrorism, said that while he is concerned by the removal of the explosives, he is far more worried by IAEA reports that large quantities of sophisticated equipment, such as electron beam welders, were looted and removed from Iraq's nuclear weapons program.

MXM and the two other types of explosives reported missing from Al-Qaqa — RDX and PETN — could also be used in devices targeting U.S. forces in Iraq. But defense officials say the many car bombs and roadside explosive devices that have menaced U.S. forces and other foreigners in Iraq have tended to be constructed from old artillery shells and other munitions, which remain in ample supply in Iraq.

Pentagon officials, attempting to reconstruct a timeline of what might have occurred at Al-Qaqa, believe they have narrowed the window for the disappearance to a two-month period between mid-March 2003, when the IAEA verified its seals were still in place, and May 2003, when U.S. military search teams arrived at the site and found it had been looted, stripped and vandalized. The search teams saw none of the explosives that were once under seal.

Although invading U.S. forces never secured the facility, defense officials have disputed the notion that such a large quantity of explosive could have been transported without notice by the U.S. military.

Bolstering the possibility that the munitions were removed before U.S. troops arrived, defense officials say, is the Saddam's

government known practice of shifting weapons from storage facilities into fields and other camouflaged sites to elude U.S. air attacks. One senior defense aide also classified U.S. intelligence photos showing this activity at Al-Qaqa before U.S. forces reached the site.

The Pentagon has contributed to confusion surrounding the case.

John Shaw, deputy undersecretary for international technology and security, told The Washington Times on Wednesday that Russian troops, working with Iraqi intelligence, "almost certainly" removed the explosives from Al-Qaqa. On Thursday, other senior defense officials, after reviewing Pentagon intelligence reports, said Shaw's remarks had no basis in fact.

Other confusion has arisen over how much explosive material had been stored at Al-Qaqa. The 377-ton figure was cited by Iraq's interim government in a letter to the IAEA earlier this month first reporting the amount missing. That figure was based on a Saddam government declaration in July 2003 of what existed at the site. It included about 155 tons of RDX. On Wednesday, ABC News reported that IAEA documents indicated there were only about 3 tons of RDX remaining at Al-Qaqa in January 2003, two months before the U.S.-led invasion.

On Thursday, however, IAEA officials said records showed another 138 tons of the RDX were being kept then at a military warehouse used by Al-Qaqa's managers at Al-Mahawel, located about 25 miles away. The IAEA has never been able to account for an additional 14 tons in July 2003 Iraqi declaration.

Melissa Fleming, an IAEA spokeswoman, said Thursday that the IAEA warned the United States in April 2003 of concerns about security at Qaqa. A fresh request to the Iraqi government generated the Oct. 10 report that the explosives were no longer at Al-Qaqa.

Staff writers Colum Lynch at the United Nations and Dafna Linzer contributed to this report.

News footage shows tons of explosives in installation

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Videotape shot by a Minnesota television crew traveling with U.S. troops in Iraq when they first opened the bunkers at the Al-Qaqa munitions base nine days after the fall of Saddam Hussein shows what appeared to be high explosives still in barrels and bearing the markings of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The video taken by KSTP of St. Paul, Minn., on April 18, 2003, could reinforce suggestions that tons of explosives are missing from a munitions installation in Iraq were looted after the U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq. The video was broadcast nationally Thursday on the ABC network.

"The photographs are consistent with what I know of Al-Qaqa," David A. Kay, a former American official who directed the hunt in Iraq for unconventional weapons and visited the site, was quoted as telling The New York Times. "The damning thing is the seals. The Iraqis didn't use seals on anything. So I'm absolutely sure that's an IAEA seal."

The question of what happened to the tons of explosives has become a major issue in the closing days of the U.S. presidential campaign.

Democrat John Kerry says the missing explosives — powerful enough to demolish a building, bring down a jetliner or set off a nuclear weapon — are another example of the Bush administration's poor planning and incompetence in handling the war in Iraq.

President Bush says the explosives were possibly removed by Saddam's forces before the invasion.

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld entered the debate Thursday, suggesting the 377 tons of explosives were taken away before U.S. forces arrived, saying any large effort to loot the material afterward would have been detected.

The Pentagon also declassified and released a single image, taken by reconnaissance aircraft or satellite just days before the war, showing two trucks outside one of the dozens of storage bunkers at the Al-Qaqa munitions base.

The particular bunker is not known to have contained any of the missing explosives, and Pentagon spokesman Larry D. Rita said the image only shows that there was some Iraqi activity at the base when it was taken, on March 17. D. Rita said the image says nothing about what happened to the explosives.

Rumsfeld, in one radio interview, also cast doubt on the suggestion of one of his subordinates that Russian forces assisted the Iraqis in removing them.

But at issue is whether the weapons were moved before or after U.S. forces occupied the region of the base in early April. No one has been able to provide conclusive evidence either way, although Iraqi officials blamed it on poor U.S. security after the war fell.

The Pentagon has said it's looking into the matter, and officials note that 400,000 tons of recovered Iraqi munitions have either been destroyed or are slated to be destroyed.

Poland is ready to talk to Iraqi kidnappers

BY MONIKA SCISLWASKA
The Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland — Poland's president said Friday that his country is prepared to communicate with the abductors of a Polish hostage in Iraq as it tries to secure her release, but he insisted that Warsaw would not negotiate with terrorists.

Teresa Borcz Khalifa, a 54-year-old with dual Polish-Iraqi citizenship, was shown in a videotape Thursday on al-Jazeera television being held by a group calling itself the Abu Bakr al-Siddiq Fundamentalists. The abductors demanded the withdrawal of Polish troops and the release of all Iraqi female prisoners.

"We are trying to do all we can to help this woman," President Aleksander Kwasniewski said of Khalifa, a convert to Islam who has lived in Iraq for about 30 years.

"Our embassy in Baghdad has been put on full alert for work and talks with those who would be ready to talk," he said on state radio. However, he insisted they would not negotiate with the captors.

"Naturally, you must not negotiate," said Kwasniewski, who rejected the demand to withdraw Poland's 2,400 troops from Iraq immediately after news of the kidnapping emerged.

Polish Maj. Gen. Andrzej Ekiert, who commands a multinational security force in central Iraq, said the military also is undertaking "intensive actions" to secure the woman's freedom, but gave no details.

Also Friday, deputy Foreign Minister Andrzej Toppik said Polish authorities were prepared to evacuate other Polish women from Iraq or give them refuge at Polish military bases in the country.

Four of nine Polish women contacted by the embassy in Baghdad have already sought help in returning to Poland since Khalifa's capture was reported, Foreign Ministry spokesman Aleksander Checcko said.

Khalifa's mother, Halina Borcz, told the news agency PAP that her daughter, born in 1954, studied Slavic languages at Krakow Jagielloń University before she left Poland to live with her Iraqi husband.

She worked for a period at the Polish embassy in Baghdad, but was fired for disciplinary reasons in 1994, according to former embassy employees.

"I will protect her; she has done nothing wrong," her mother said. "Maybe the government will help her, maybe they have some diplomatic ways to solve it."

al-Qaida tape threatens U.S.

BY HOWARD KURTZ
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — ABC News aired a videotape Thursday night of a purported American member of al-Qaida declaring that a new series of terrorist attacks against the United States could come "at any moment."

The network, which has held the tape since Monday while it tried to authenticate it, acted after being told by the CIA that the video began "with the trademark of an al-Qaida production," as reporter Brian Ross explained. Federal investigators do not know the identity of the man on the tape, but the government is distributing copies to 13 current and former officials named during the 75-minute video.

Officials have been unable to match the speaker's voice to any known al-Qaida supporter or sympathizer.

The speaker, whose face is obscured by a headress and who is identified only as "Azzam the American," says on the video:

ABC airs segments that speak of 'global war on America' after giving copy to CIA for review

tape: "No, my fellow countrymen, you are guilty, guilty, guilty, guilty."

"You are as guilty as Bush and Cheney. You're as guilty as Rumsfeld and Ashcroft and Powell."

The man continued: "After decades of American tyranny and oppression, now it's your turn to die. Allah willing, the streets of America will run red with blood, matching drop for drop the blood of America's victims." The man speaks in accented English, pronouncing, for example, "tyranny" as "tie-ranny."

He also makes references to comedian Bill Maher, who once said that suicide attackers were less cowardly than long-distance cruise missile launchers, and Sept. 11 commission Chairman Thomas Kean. The man

also criticizes Muslims who have lost their faith.

Invoking Osama bin Laden's name, he says that "September 11 was but the opening salvo of the global war on America."

A U.S. counterterrorism official told The Washington Post that intelligence analysts are still examining the tape. It has been judged to be of professional quality and the speaker is considered to be college-educated and probably raised or educated in the United States, the official said.

ABC executives were frustrated that after holding the tape and working closely with federal officials to authenticate it, Fox News obtained and aired a copy about 20 minutes before it was shown on Peter Jennings' newsweek Thursday night.

Susan Schmecht contributed to this report.

Border boom: Black market thriving in Iran

Many make a living smuggling goods from Iraq's outskirts

BY YAHYA BARAZANJI
The Associated Press

HERGEINA, Iraq — Kurdish Iraqis in poor border towns are taking advantage of the porous boundary with Iraq to sneak into the country for coveted items — like alcohol — to sell back home.

For the past three years, Farshid Karimi has earned his living smuggling goods — and dodging border guards.

The 23-year-old was drinking a cold beer at an Iraqi bar on a recent evening, taking a short break before carrying 60 bottles of whiskey into Iran. With his baggy, Kurdish-style pants tucked inside his socks so he wouldn't trip while climbing the region's mountains, Karimi had already carried his load two hours.

Karimi is one of the "night men" who hide on the Iranian side of the border, waiting for the right moment to make the crossing under cover of darkness.

"I am afraid of encountering Iranian soldiers who would chase me and might shoot at me for carrying liquor," he said as he sipped his beer. "Or I might wander on the road and end up stepping on a land mine," left over from the Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

Karimi, who is from the Iranian border town of Marivan, admits that what he's doing is dangerous, but for him, the risk is worth it. He must provide for his family of five.

Alcohol is illegal and considered sinful under Iran's strict Islamic laws. Lashing is the usual punishment for drinking in Iran and traffickers can end up in prison.

Last year, Iranian soldiers caught Karimi in a border ambush. He was jailed for one year and given 80 lashes in public. His back was covered in blood and he could not sleep on it for a month, he said.



Kurdish smugglers load up their horses with goods to take across the border into Iran from Hergeina, Iraq, in this Oct. 24 photo. Despite efforts to tighten border security, smugglers remain so active that a few taverns have opened in the Iraqi frontier towns to serve smugglers hot meals, beer and whiskey.

"I did not mind the physical pain. What hurt most was my pride and dignity that was shattered when they fight among themselves to purchase whatever Iraqi goods are available."

After crossing the border, smugglers gather in the Iraqi town of Basmagh, where they fight among themselves to purchase whatever Iraqi goods are available. Iraqi trader Mohammed Ibrahim, who sells china, says he offers 100 packages for sale every day but has often up to 500 smugglers clamoring to buy.

"It becomes a fierce fight where survival is for the fittest," he said. The Basmagh crossing point has two routes — one used by trucks transferring legal goods and another used by smugglers carrying items that are illegal to

sell in Iran. The smugglers, who sometimes have to bribe the Iranian soldiers to let them in and out of the country, also carry foodstuffs not available in Iranian border towns, like tea, sugar and rice. It's not only young men who embark on the smuggling journey. The elderly, children and women also take a chance.

Sirva Ahmady, a 31-year-old Iranian widow with eight children, says she crosses the border into Iraq three times a day to buy plates and cups to sell back home.

"This is my everyday routine so that my children won't go hungry," she said. "The worst thing for me is to return home empty handed."

MILITARY UPDATE

Tom Philpott

Federal judge dismisses divorcees' suit

Case challenged law that allows state courts to divide military retirement

A federal judge has dismissed a lawsuit brought by 58 divorced servicemembers and retirees challenging the constitutionality of the Uniformed Services Former Spouses Protection Act. The 1982 law allows state courts to divide military retirement as property in divorce settlements.

U.S. District Court Judge James C. Cacheris in Alexandria, Va., granted government motions Oct. 12 to dismiss Addkins, et al. v. Rumsfeld and all claims brought by individual plaintiffs and by USFSA, a non-profit support group established to raise legal fees for the court challenge.

In a 15-page opinion, Cacheris said the federal court, for the U.S. Eastern District of Virginia, lacked subject matter jurisdiction to hear the case, and the plaintiffs lacked legal standing to bring their lawsuit.

Cacheris also ruled that, because the legal challenges could have been raised in state courts when the original divorce and property issues were being settled, a legal principle of *res judicata* applies. In Latin that means "the thing has been judged" and therefore a new case is useless.

Lawyers for the divorced servicemembers and retirees have filed a motion for reconsideration. They also announced plans

to appeal to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit in Richmond, Va.

Judge Cacheris agreed with U.S. Attorney Paul J. McNulty that the court doesn't need to weigh the merit of the constitutional challenges to the USFSA. He had to dismiss the case based on Supreme Court rulings that bar federal courts from nullifying state judgments on issues that could have been raised before state court. This Rooker-Feldman doctrine has been used by other federal courts to dismiss other challenges to the USFSA.

In its motion to Cacheris to reconsider, USFSA argues that some legal flaws of the USFSA aren't "ripe" to be challenged in state courts at time of divorce because the harmful effects don't occur until servicemembers retire and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service begins to divide retirement pay.

Stop-loss suit

A different team of lawyers, in San Francisco, has switched plaintiffs in their legal challenge to Army stop-loss orders that keep thousands of soldiers on active duty to serve in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"John Doe," an unnamed National Guardsman in California, dismissed his

lawsuit against the Army after he was released from active duty this month. One of his lawyers, Joshua Sondheimer, said Guard policy requires that soldiers who do not deploy be relieved of the stop-loss order 90 days after the unit is alerted for mobilization.

Now a second California Guardsman, "John Doe II," has filed a lawsuit against Army stop-loss. The circumstances are similar and the legal arguments are largely the same.

Current stop-loss authority, said Sondheimer, flows from President Bush's Sept. 14, 2001, executive order authorizing a Ready Reserve call-up to respond to "the continuing and immediate threat of further terrorist attacks on the United States."

Without evidence the U.S. occupation of Iraq is protecting America from terrorism, the Army has no legal basis to use stop loss to keep Doe II on active duty involuntarily, Sondheimer said.

Like Doe I, the veterans enlisted in the Guard for just one year under the "Try One" program. His enlistment was to expire next April, but last month he received mobilization orders for Iraq and an extra year of service. Doe II, who also has two children, sought a restraining order to stop his deployment to Fort Lewis, Wash., for

training for Iraq. It was denied. His transportation unit is there now and expected to leave for Iraq in late November. A U.S. district court judge in Sacramento will hear arguments Nov. 5 on whether Doe II can escape stop loss and his second combat tour in the Middle East.

Suicide prevention

Forty-eight servicemembers have taken their own lives while deployed to Iraqi, Afghanistan and Kuwait since 9/11, and another 31 veterans of those wars have committed suicide stateside, according to statistics released at the third annual Military Suicide Prevention Conference, in Arlington, Va., in late October.

The suicide rate is still lower than for the U.S. population, adjusting for age and gender, but above service averages, particularly for the Army.

Experts point to the high stress of long, dangerous deployments, combined with "triggering" factors such as a failing relationship and financial or legal problems. Another factor, in theater, is ready access to weapons. Almost all of the in-theater suicides have been by gunshot.

To comment, write Military Update, P.O. Box 231111, Centerville, VA 20126-1111, e-mail milupdate@aol.com or visit www.militaryupdate.com

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Report: 100,000 Iraqi civilians killed in war

Number is far higher than previous death-toll estimates

BY EMMA ROSS
The Associated Press

LONDON — Researchers have estimated that as many as 100,000 more Iraqis — many of them women and children — died since the start of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq than would have been expected otherwise, based on the death rate before the war.

Writing in the British-based medical journal The Lancet, the American and Iraqi researchers concluded that violence accounted for most of the extra deaths and that airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition were a major factor.

There is no official figure for the number of Iraqis killed since the conflict began, but some non-governmental estimates range from 10,000 to 30,000. As of Thursday, 1,106 U.S. servicemen had been killed, according to the U.S. Defense Department.

The scientists who wrote the report concede that the data they based their projections on were of "limited precision," because the quality of the information depends on the accuracy of the household interviews used for the study. The interviewers were Iraqi, most of them doctors.

Designed and conducted by researchers at Johns Hopkins University, Columbia University and the Al-Mustansiriyah University in Baghdad, the study was published Thursday on The Lancet's Web site.

The survey attributed most of the extra deaths to violence and said airstrikes by coalition forces caused most of the violent deaths.

"Most individuals reportedly killed by coalition forces were

women and children," the researchers wrote.

The report was released just days before the U.S. presidential election, and the lead researcher said he wanted it that way. The Lancet routinely publishes papers on the Web before they appear in print, particularly if it considers the findings of urgent public health interest.

Those reports then appear later in the print issue of the journal.

The journal's spokesmen said they were uncertain which print issue the Iraqi report would appear in and said it was too late to make Friday's issue, and possibly too late for the Nov. 5 edition.

Les Roberts, the lead researcher from Johns Hopkins, said the article's timing was up to him.

"I e-mailed it in on Sept.

30 under the condition that it came out before the election," Roberts said. "My motive in doing that was not to skew the election. My motive was that if this came out during the campaign, both candidates would be forced to pledge to protect civilian lives in Iraq."

"I was opposed to the war and I still think that the war was a bad idea, but I think that our science

has transcended our perspectives," Roberts said. "As an American, I am really, really sorry to be reporting this."

Richard Peto, an expert on study methods who was not involved with the research, said the approach the scientists took is a reasonable one to investigate the Iraq death toll.

However, it's possible that they may have zoned in on hotspots that might not be representative

of the death toll across Iraq, said Peto, a professor of medical statistics at Oxford University in England.

Lancet editor Richard Horton wrote in an editorial accompanying the survey that more household clusters would have improved the precision of the report, "but at an enormous and unacceptable risk to the team of interviewers."

"This remarkable piece of work represents the efforts of a courageous team of scientists," he wrote.

To conduct the survey, investigators visited 33 neighborhoods spread evenly across the country in September, randomly selecting clusters of 30 households to sample. Of the 988 households visited, 808, consisting of 7,868 people,

There were 46 deaths in the surveyed households before the war. After the invasion, there were 142 deaths. That is an increase from 5 deaths per 1,000 people per year to 12.3 per 1,000 people per year — more than double.

However, more than a third of the post-invasion deaths were reported in one cluster of house-



An Iraqi man cries for his slain son while next to a charred civilian vehicle that was blown up when insurgents set off a car bomb in Baghdad on Thursday. The man, whose son was killed six months ago, mourns regularly at the site of new bombings.

holds in the city Fallujah, where fighting has been most intense recently. Because the fighting was so severe there, the numbers from that location may have exaggerated the overall picture.

When the researchers recalculated the effect of the war without the statistics from Fallujah, the deaths ended up at 7.9 per 1,000 people per year — still 1.5 times higher than before the war.

The researchers estimated the nationwide death toll due to the conflict by subtracting the pre-invasion death rate and multiplying that number by the estimated population of Iraq — 24.4 million at the start of the war. Then that number was converted to a total number of deaths by dividing by 1,000 and adjusting for the 18 months since the invasion.

"This isn't about individual soldiers doing bad things. This appears to be a problem with the approach to occupation in Iraq," Roberts said.

The researchers called for further confirmation by an independent body such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, or the World Health Organization.

The study was funded by the Center for International Emergency Disaster and Refugee Studies at Johns Hopkins University and by the Small Arms Survey in Geneva, Switzerland, a research project based at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva.

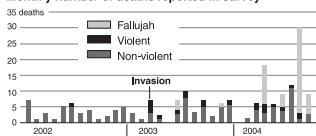


A wounded Iraqi boy looks at the wreckage after a bomb explosion Monday near a U.S.-Australian military convoy in Baghdad. New research has estimated the Iraqi civilian death toll at up to 100,000, mostly women and children. The number is far higher than previous estimates, which range from 10,000 to 30,000.

Iraq civilian deaths due to war

Iraqis suffered a more than two-fold increase in deaths during the 18 months after the U.S. invasion, compared to 15 months preceding it. The finding, from a sample survey of Iraqi households, indicates about 100,000 deaths from the invasion and occupation.

Monthly number of deaths reported in survey



SOURCE: The Lancet

AP

IN THE STATES

Stars align to support candidates' final push

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON—After days of trying to make political hay over last Iraqi explosives, the Democratic ticket turned Friday to an FBI probe of Halliburton as evidence of Bush administration special favors to special interests. President Bush was campaigning with actor-politician Arnold Schwarzenegger.

"We need a president and a vice president of the United States who consistently stand up for the interests of the American people, and that's not what we're seeing right now," Democratic running mate John Edwards said on CBS Friday morning.

Edwards was even more pointed Thursday night when he told 3,000 people at a Davenport, Iowa, rally. "You cannot stand with Halliburton, big oil companies and the Saudi royal family and still stand up for the American people."

Bush turned to a pair of American heroes for affirmation of his re-election bid. Retired Gen. Tommy Franks, who oversaw the combat in Afghanistan and Iraq, saluted his old boss Thursday night. Bush also was getting the endorsement of freshly minted World Series champion pitcher Curt Schilling. The Boston Red Sox player had planned to appear Friday with Bush, but his doctors advised him not to travel because of his injured ankle, Bush aides said.

After his appearance in New Hampshire, Bush was to share the stage in Ohio with California Gov. Schwarzenegger.

The stars that counted for Bush on Thursday were those earned by a lineup of retired military officers who joined him before a crowd of more than 10,000 in suburban Cleveland. Chief among the brass was Franks, who saluted Bush and said Kerry "disrespects our troops."

"God bless you, Tommy," Bush said as he took the microphone from him.

In Madison, Wis., more than 80,000 people turned out Thursday to see Kerry and Bruce Springsteen, who sang "Promised Land" and "No Surrender," the latter adopted as the Democrat's campaign anthem. Sheryl Crow and Bon Jovi, too, have been in the Massachusetts senator's opening acts this year.

Kerry the headed for Florida, his campaign start-

ing through a series of unwelcome developments for the Republicans.

This late in the game, any miscue is ripe for exploitation, and the Republicans committed a few — in one instance watching former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani explain himself after seeming to blame troops in Iraq for the missing explosives.

The Bush campaign, seeing an unusual opportunity to make gains on exotic Democratic turf, said Thursday that Cheney would go to Hawaii for a rally Sunday night, a striking investment of time and travel for a state Republicans have won only twice since statehood in 1959.

The Democrats weren't standing by. Al Gore, who won the state by nearly 20 points four years ago, was on his way to campaign there and so was Kerry's daughter Alex.

Kerry's running mate quickly went on the offensive when word came out that the FBI had begun investigating whether the Pentagon improperly awarded no-bid Iraq reconstruction contracts to Halliburton Co., the Houston-based company formerly headed by Vice President Dick Cheney.

"At every turn for the past four years, George Bush and Dick Cheney gave out special favors and looked out for their special interest friends," Edwards said.

Almost everywhere that counted, polls found the race exceptionally close. Internal campaign polls found it close still.

New battleground surveys suggested Kerry was leading in Ohio and Michigan, Bush was ahead in Florida and the two were tied in Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and Oregon.

Bush told USA Today he hasn't spent any time worrying that the campaign could end with no clear winner, as the 2000 race notoriously did.

"It's important that everybody vote, it's important that the elections be fair, and it's important that the election end on election night," he said in an interview published Friday.

Kerry, also speaking with USA Today on Thursday, said he believes the outcome will be known Tuesday night. "Just like I believed the Red Sox would win the World Series."



AP photos

Democratic Presidential candidate Sen. John Kerry of Massachusetts greets a crowd at the University of Toledo in Ohio on Thursday.



President Bush shakes hands with supporters at a campaign rally at the Hara Sports Complex in Dayton, Ohio on Thursday.

Pa. governor seeks Justice Dept. triples poll monitors overseas extension

By MARK SCOLFORO

The Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Under pressure from military voters and Republicans, Democratic Gov. Ed Rendell said Friday that he will ask a federal judge to extend the deadline for counting overseas ballots by one week.

Rendell told a news conference in Philadelphia that Republicans could produce only one voter — out of 26,000 overseas military and civilian voters — who failed to get the absentee ballot he requested.

Nonetheless, "Even if it's just one or two votes, their votes should be counted," Rendell said.

GOP state Sen. John Pippy, an Army reserve captain who served in Iraq, criticized Rendell's proposal, saying the governor asked for — and received — a nearly three-week extension for counting absentee ballots in

the April primary and should support a two-week extension now.

A Republican-financed federal lawsuit by two servicemen in Iraq and Kuwait filed Wednesday against Rendell and Secretary of State Pedro Cortes seeks a 15-day extension for their ballots' return.

Rendell said one of the plaintiffs' ballots was delivered to the address he put on his absentee ballot request form. He said there was no explanation why the other plaintiff never received an absentee ballot.

"There may have been a (mistake) in the mail. But it's not widespread," Rendell told CNN on Friday.

A hearing on the federal lawsuit was scheduled for Friday before U.S. District Judge Yvette Kane, and Rendell said his lawyers would ask that ballots postmarked by Tuesday, Election Day, be counted until Nov. 9.

By CURT ANDERSON

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department is sending out three times as many poll watchers on Election Day as it did in 2000, assigning some to Florida and other closely contested states in the presidential election.

The 1,090 observers and monitors will be on duty in at least 86 locations in 25 states Tuesday. In 2000, 317 watched for violations of the anti-discrimination Voting Rights Act and other election problems in the presidential race.

That contest was not settled for 36 days after the vote, when the Supreme Court ordered Florida to end its recount of disputed ballots.

Personnel from the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division will be in eight Florida counties this year, including Broward, Palm Beach and Dade, at the center of the recount four years ago.

Federal monitors and observers also will go to Ohio, Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, New Mexico, Pennsylvania and Nevada. In those states, the race is tight between President Bush and Democratic Sen. John Kerry.

Legal challenges already have arisen in several states over possible voting problems, including disputes with absentee ballots and the handling of ballots cast in the wrong precinct.

Thousands of volunteers from both political parties and affiliated groups are expected to monitor polling places to track turnout and how balloting procedures are performed.

Julie Fernandes, senior policy analyst and special counsel for the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, said many of the federal officials are going to places where there have been recent or historical problems of voter intimidation or disenfranchisement of minorities and people who speak languages other than English.

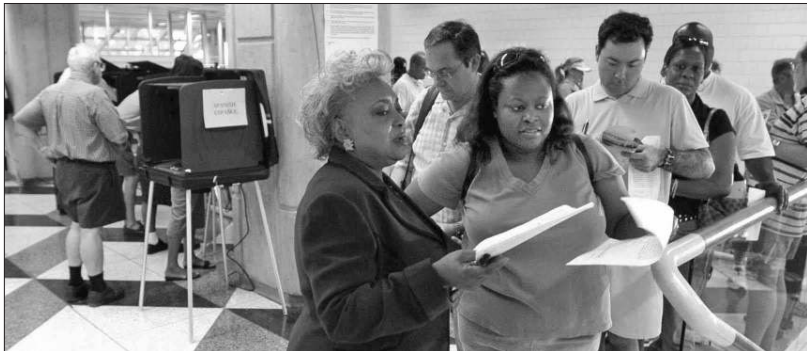
"I am happy to see they are doing such a broad deployment," Fernandes said. "The program is useful, in that it has a tremendous deterrent effect."

The 1,090 federal poll watchers break down this way:

■ 840 are observers authorized by the 1965 Voting Rights Act, which ended racial barriers to voting. These observers are sent to states and counties that are covered by that law or are under a judge's order as a result of the law. Areas include six counties in Mississippi, four in New Mexico and Cook County, which includes Chicago.

■ 250 are Justice Department Civil Rights Division personnel — not prosecutors — who have somewhat different powers from the observers. These monitors will go to the Florida counties and elsewhere.

Separately, senior prosecutors will be on duty in all 93 U.S. attorneys' offices to handle any complaints about voting problems and to pursue any allegations of voting fraud or other election abuses. The FBI will have agents on duty at headquarters in Washington and in each of its 56 field offices to handle such complaints as well.



Supervisor of Elections Dr. Brenda Snipes, left, talks with Vanessa Gilyard of Davis Beach as Gilyard waits in line to cast her vote on Oct. 18, the first day of early voting at the main downtown library in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

AP

Florida vote '04: Another nightmare?

Voter challenges and provisional ballots could be this year's chads

BY TIM REYNOLDS
The Associated Press

MIAMI — Florida's election chief reminded county workers to keep lines moving next Tuesday by handing out provisional ballots if they are confronted with a blizzard of disputes over eligibility of voters.

Tensions have been mounting in the run-up to the presidential vote as politicians trade accusations over claims of fraud, missing absentee ballots and concerns that thousands of voter registrations will be challenged in "hand-to-hand combat at the precincts" on Nov. 2.

Dawn Roberts, the head of the state Division of Elections, responded Thursday night to calls for help from county election chiefs.

In a memo, Roberts stressed the need to keep lines moving and offer provisional ballots when in doubt, even if alleged ex-felons are singled out. Florida laws bars voting by convicted felons unless they have petitioned to have that right restored.

Provisional ballots are set aside to be counted later if the person is determined to be a valid voter.

The GOP claimed Thursday that 925 convicted felons without voting rights have either voted or

requested absentee ballots for this election. The party alerted the Florida Department of Law Enforcement.

State Republican leaders said they are protecting "the integrity of the process" by compiling a list of voters who they say are improperly registered and should not be allowed to cast ballots Tuesday. But a voting rights advocate said the list might be inaccurate.

"I presume they will use it as a basis for challenges," said Howard Simon, the executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union in Florida. "And when they're using a list that's very likely inaccurate for challenges, I think we're in for hand-to-hand combat at the precincts."

In Broward County, where the problem was late-arriving absentee ballots, elections office prepared 1,000 ballots for overnight shipment to Floridians in other states, and expected to send up to 14,000 ballots Friday to residents who requested them weeks ago.

Broward was a hot spot in the recount battle in the 2002 presidential election before the Supreme Court declared George W. Bush the winner by 537 votes.

A group of 58,000 ballots mailed on Oct. 7 and 8 has

Hurricane-damaged polling places throw another wrench into election

BY BILL KACZOR
The Associated Press

PENSACOLA, Fla. — The hurricanes that struck Florida this year left polling places in shambles and displaced thousands of voters, but election officials say they are taking steps to allow everyone the opportunity to cast a ballot Nov. 2.

Gov. Jeb Bush issued an executive order allowing the U.S. Postal Service to forward absentee ballots — a practice that's normally prohibited — to make sure they get to residents whose homes were damaged or destroyed.

The storms wrecked more than 90 polling places, although most have been replaced or consolidated with other sites. Despite the damage, election officials predict that voter turnouts, aided by early and absentee voting, will equal or exceed other presidential elections.



Jeb Bush

brought a particularly high number of complaints from Broward voters who said many either did not arrive or didn't arrive in a timely way.

The U.S. Postal Service has denied mishandling the ballots, but a regional manager worried in an internal e-mail that his staff seemed unaware of procedures

for processing them, the South Florida Sun-Sentinel reported in Friday editions.

South Florida District Manager Butch Parker wrote Tuesday that absentee ballots with improper postage sat idle in postal facilities instead of being returned to their sender, and that they "continue to find absentee ballots

The issue has special resonance in Florida, where recounts held up the presidential election for five weeks in 2000 before the Supreme Court declared George W. Bush the winner by 537 votes.

Carl Burns, 76, cast an absentee ballot this year because he didn't want to lose his vote to Ivan, one of four hurricanes that pummeled Florida in August and September.

"I don't know if my old polling place is going to be there or not," said Burns, a retired claims manager from Pensacola in Escambia County.

Polling places for 10 of the county's 90 precincts were lost when Ivan hit the Panhandle in mid-September, but election chief Bonnie Jones has found replacements.

There have been 15,000 requests for absentee ballots in Santa Rosa County, twice as many as four years ago, said county elections supervisor Ann Bodenstien. She attributes much of the increase to voters who have been forced to relocate.

Charlotte County lost most of its 80 polling places to Hurricane Charley in August. Although those precincts were consolidated into 22 sites for the primary, turnout was only 18 percent compared to 24 percent four years ago.

mixed in with other classes of mail."

Broward County elections supervisor Brenda Snipes said Thursday that her office has sent out some 128,000 absentee ballots this year, that 72,000 completed ballots have already been returned, and she expects 40,000 more by Tuesday.

Hacking pleads not guilty for wife's murder despite brother's letter

BY PAUL FOY
The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — A man pleaded not guilty Friday to first-degree murder in the death of his wife, whose remains were found in a landfill weeks after her disappearance.

The judge set Mark Hacking's trial for April 18. Prosecutors are not seeking the death penalty.

Authorities believe Lori Hacking, 27, was

Mark Hacking

killed July 9 after learning her husband wasn't enrolled in medical school in North Carolina, though they were arranging to move there.

It was among a series of deceptions Mark Hacking had perpetrated over several years, police say.

The victim's brother, Paul Soares, sent a letter to Hacking in jail, urging him to "be a man" and plead guilty, according to a newspaper story Friday.

"Save your family the grief and cost of this attorney. Just plead guilty for once. Just tell the truth. Take responsibility for your actions," Soares wrote, according to the *Deseret Morning News*.

"Your father said you were determined to do what is right — even if it costs you your life. ... Just tell the judge the truth.

"Admit it. Don't ask for some lenient plea bargain. Be a man," the letter continued.

Hacking's defense attorney has indicated he would take the case to trial and challenge Hacking's alleged confession to his brothers that he shot his wife while she slept and disposed of her remains, the weapon and a mattress in the trash.

Defense attorney Gil Athey declined to discuss his plans Friday.

Prosecutor Robert Stott said no discussions have been held about a plea agreement.

O'Reilly, former producer settle harassment lawsuit

By SAMUEL MAULL

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Citing his wish to shield his family, Fox News Channel's Bill O'Reilly settled a harassment lawsuit brought by a former producer accusing him of graphically discussing sex with her.

"This brutal ordeal is now officially over, and I will never speak of it again," O'Reilly said on Thursday night's edition of his talk show, "The O'Reilly Factor."

O'Reilly, who is married with two children, also dropped an extortion lawsuit against his accuser and her lawyer. Both sides have agreed to keep the details confidential, O'Reilly's attorney said.

Andrea Mackris, 33, who was a producer on the show, sued the outspoken, top-rated TV host Oct. 13, alleging O'Reilly made a series of explicit phone calls to her, advised her to use a vibrator and telling her about sexual fantasies involving her.

Earlier that day, O'Reilly, 55, filed a lawsuit accusing Mackris and her lawyer of trying to extort \$60 million in "hush money" over her allegations.

"This matter has caused enormous

pain, but I had to protect my family, and I did," O'Reilly, whose ratings have gone up 30 percent since the lawsuits were filed, told his viewers Thursday.

"All I can say to you is please do not believe everything you hear and read."

Shortly before "Factor" aired, O'Reilly's lawyer, Ronald Green, issued a statement saying the cases and claims had been withdrawn and all parties agreed there was no wrongdoing by O'Reilly, Mackris or Mackris's lawyer.

Green's statement about the settlement did not mention money, and it could not be learned immediately whether it was a factor.

Mackris's lawyer did not return several telephone calls seeking comment.

Earlier, O'Reilly had vowed to fight the accusations. "If I have to go down, I'm willing to do it," he said just after the suits were filed. "I'm going to take a stand. I'm a big mouth on the air and I'm a big mouth off the air."

He called the case "the single most evil thing I have ever experienced, and I've seen a lot. But these people picked the wrong guy."

Green had refused to confirm or

deny specific things that Mackris claimed O'Reilly said to her, but he said at the time that O'Reilly "denies that he has done anything that rises to the level of unlawful sexual harassment."

Green also had said he believed there were tapes of conversations between the two and asked a court to compel Mackris to produce them so they could be played publicly.

"I know that he does not fear what is on the tapes," Green said at the time.

Among the accusations made in the suit, Mackris said O'Reilly suggested during a phone conversation in August 9, 1997, in the home and was clearly excited. Before hanging up, she said, O'Reilly told her: "I appreciate the fun phone call." She contended he made a similar call Sept. 21, ending by saying: "Next time you'll come up to my hotel room and we'll make this happen."

Several days after filing her sexual harassment suit, Mackris filed amended court papers, claiming Fox had violated her rights under New York state law by firing her after the allegations were raised.

Fox denied Mackris had been fired, saying she had simply stopped coming to work.



Bill O'Reilly



Andrea Mackris

Rapper's mom drops wrongful death suit

By CHUCK PHILIPS

Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES — The mother of late rap star Notorious B.I.G. has decided to dismiss from a wrongful death lawsuit the man she accused of shooting her son, raising new questions about theories surrounding the entertainer's slaying seven years ago.

In her suit, Voletta Wallace named Los Angeles area resident Harry Billups, also known as Amir Muhammad, as the triggerman who ambushed her son on March 9, 1997, in the mid-Wilshire district. Billups could not be reached for comment Thursday, but has long denied any involvement in the killing.

Wallace was unavailable, and her attorneys refused to discuss the terms of the proposed dismissal or why it was initiated. The move came after Billups, who has never been questioned by police, submitted to a pre-trial deposition during which he denied involvement in the murder and offered to take a lie detector test with the FBI, according to sources close to the negotiations.

The sources said no money changed hands as part of a confidential settlement between the two parties. Wallace agreed, however, to dismiss Billups as a defendant in the case.

Still remaining in the suit are the city of Los Angeles and former Los Angeles police officer David A. Mack, who is serving a 14-year federal prison sentence for bank robbery.

In her complaint, filed in 2002, Wallace alleged that Mack hired Billups to shoot her son and that police did not pursue the investigation after suspecting one of their own might be involved.

The potential dismissal of such a key defendant as Billups presents a difficult challenge for the rapper's mother. Without the alleged shooter in the case, it becomes more difficult to prove the conspiracy theory upon which the case is built.

In August, Voletta Wallace's attorneys told the city said she would settle the case out of court for \$105 million. After a judge in a confidential conference suggested that number was excessive, Wallace's lawyers slashed the figure to \$18 million. An amount rejected last month by the City Council, sources said.

Billups and Mack were first implicated in the rapper's murder by former Los Angeles police Det. Russell Poole. He maintains he was forced out of the case after the city's own investigating police involvement in slaying Notorious B.I.G., whose real name was Christopher Wallace.

Poole has publicly contended that Mack was commissioned by rap mogul Marion "Suge" Knight as part of a bi-coastal rap feud.

Man who weighed more than 1,000 lbs. has successful gastric bypass surgery



ARGUS LEADER/AP

Patrick Deuel talks Aug. 9 at a Denver McKennan Hospital, in Sioux Falls, S.D., about his massive weight loss since June after checking into the hospital at 1,072 pounds. Deuel was recovering this week from obesity surgery, which reduced the size of his stomach.

By DORIS HAUGEN

The Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. — A man who weighed about half a ton when he was admitted to a hospital was recovering Wednesday from obesity surgery. Doctors said he was "doing very well," moving around and even cracking jokes.

"He's very witty," surgeon Dr. Frederick Harris told reporters Wednesday.

Patrick Deuel, 42, underwent the procedure to reduce the size of his stomach four months after being admitted to the hospital at 1,072 pounds.

He was in good spirits and relieved Tuesday's procedure went so well, Harris said. "We didn't find anything that was scary at all," he said.

Rehabilitation could start in about a week and Deuel could be home by the end of November, Harris said.

In the hours leading up to surgery, however, Deuel was anxious, wanting the procedure done but worrying he wouldn't wake up, Harris said. Once the surgery preparations began, he began to relax.

"He was singing right up to the part where they put the tube in his mouth," Harris said.

Deuel had been bedridden since last fall and was malnourished because so many of his calories came from foods high in fat and carbohydrates.

Deuel had difficulty breathing and suffered from high blood pressure and diabetes linked to obesity that his doctor said were

killing him.

Gastric bypass surgery was thought to be his best chance for permanent weight loss, but doctors said Deuel needed to lose some weight first, to gain enough strength so he could walk on his own and prove he was healthy enough to survive the surgery.

Before going into surgery on Tuesday, Deuel had lost 421 pounds.

He said his diabetes and high-blood pressure were under control and credited the results to a 1,200-calorie-a-day diet and exercise.

Caregivers and others are starting to take notice of the changes, he said.

"Every time I move, they don't look at me like, 'My God, he is going to fall down or something,'" Deuel told Sioux Falls television station KJZZ in an interview before the surgery.

Last month, Deuel took his first steps with the help of nurses and two walkers for support. More recently, he has been walking up stairs and even swimming at the hospital's pool.

Gastric bypass is the most common obesity surgery in the United States. The operation involves creating a pouch in the upper stomach and attaching it to a section of intestine, reducing the amount of food patients can eat.

Deuel, a former restaurant manager from Valentine, Neb., is just under 6 feet tall and has always fought his weight.

He weighed about 90 pounds in kindergarten and more than 250 pounds in middle school.

"He was singing right up to the part where they put the tube in his mouth."

Dr. Frederick Harris

on Patrick Deuel's mood before the surgery

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A better film: 'Mrs. Miniver'

I notice there's still a lot of 'Fahrenheit 9/11' press out there. It's a movie I don't plan to see. I don't think much of Michael Moore's effort; there is always some iconoclastic ideology hovering around to capitalize on catastrophe. Someone else can have my seat.

But for an inspiring movie more appropriate for our times, watch 'Mrs. Miniver,' a 1942 black-and-white classic.

How is a 60-plus-year-old film applicable today? Easy! It's the story of an average English middle-class family whose everyday existence is turned upside down by the Battle of Britain.

In the movie, you see folks from all walks of life pulling together to save off the fury of the blitz while they each struggle to understand a ruthless enemy and decipher the twisted rationale that drives him. It was filmed shortly after the Battle of Britain had been waged and (barely) won, yet the occasional German bomber raids would continue. The dreaded buzz bombs and V-2 rocket attacks were still a few years away, as was D-Day, so World War II's outcome was uncertain. Thus the movie captures well a life-and-death struggle that was ongoing for the United Kingdom at that time.

OK, jump ahead 60 years — "ruthless enemy" and "twisted rationale"? Yep, we can learn a lot from that film, and the British in general during that time in history. The real message, and a darn good philosophy for today, came in the film's last few minutes. I won't reveal the content of that last scene, but I'll bet when you see it, hear it, you will swear the text was written just yesterday, solely for us in this decade. Great stuff.

Air Force Col. John R. Culcasura
Brussels, Belgium

'Snapshots' were sickening

I just read "Snapshots send a message of 'sorry' (Oct. 17). Frankly, it sickens me. What are these people screaming for? Topple a dictator and giving a nation back to its people? Being a decent human, it bothers me to

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see civilians, especially children, caught in the crossfire. It also bothers me to see prisoners tortured.

But it bothers me just as much when soldiers deliver supplies to schools and have teachers refuse the help, fearing reprisals from insurgents. And when the uprisings to punish the terrorists beheading innocent hostages?

These so-called "ordinary Americans" forget that, for the first time in many years, the Iraqi people will have a fair chance to decide the future path of their nation in January.

Just a few days ago, I was near a mosque broadcasting anti-American, pro-insurgent propaganda over its loudspeakers. We took no action, just monitored the situation from a respectful distance. Two years ago, had it been anti-Saddam propaganda, the participants would likely have been executed, along with their families. Where's the suffering there?

Only 60 years ago, Germany and Japan had cities leveled by strategic bombing. Collateral damage is always regrettable. What are these people screaming in this war doesn't even compare. This is due to precision guided weapons and American reluctance to cause undue suffering.

The individuals in this apology campaign have put themselves on a level with Jane Fonda and a certain political figure's activities during the Vietnam conflict, by demonizing and undermining the efforts of American soldiers.

I say let's invite these "ordinary Americans" to the Sunni Triangle. Let them dodge bombs and rocket-propelled grenades, then put a smile on and hand candy to kids, as our troops do every day. Let them see what we should be so sorry for.

Staff Sgt. Mike Lewis
Camp Habaniyah, Iraq

Freedom of religion

Thank you for enlightening me about freedom of the press and an open market place ("Keep religion out of paper," Oct. 22).

I'm an American citizen and I serve my country as a professional armorer. If you're going to judge me, then examine the facts. Here's what I'm guilty of: I believe strongly in the God of my faith and sincerely making Him the center of my life. I'm guilty of loving my family, attending church, studying my Bible, protecting all life, being part of my political system (i.e. voting), and trying to be a good neighbor.

The First Amendment was written to keep the state out of the church, not the church out of the state. I find it troubling that we as a freedom-loving pluralistic society are frightened by religious views that were the underpinning of our society for generations. You don't have to believe in them, but why deny them equal access?

Do people do wrong things in the name of religion? Yes. Does that change the belief system? No. No more than a drunk, abusive mathematician change mathematical absolutes by behaving badly. A wise philosopher once said, "Truth is truth regardless of the consequences."

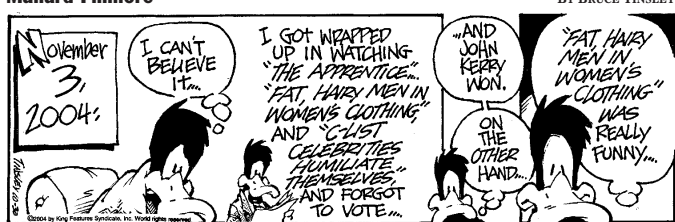
Write me off as a narrow-minded right-wing conservative if you want. I've heard all the bigoted comments; but I'm your co-worker and neighbor. I don't intend to crum any of my beliefs down your throat. I stand firmly with my ideas and listen politely to yours. That's freedom!

Mike Burnette
Ramstein, Germany

BY GARRY TRUDEAU



Mallard Fillmore



Looking at the news

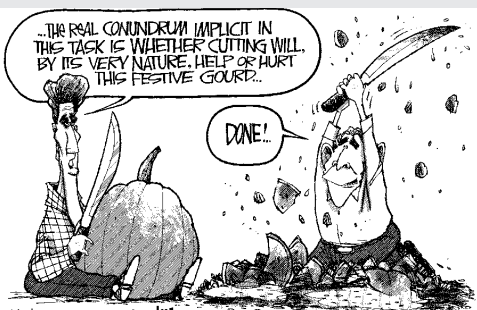
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IN THE WORLD

European leaders sign EU constitution

Basics of the agreement

BY ROBERT WIELAARD
The Associated Press

ROME — European leaders on Friday signed the EU's first constitution, a diplomatic triumph they hope will give the union a sharper international profile and speed up decision-making in a club now embracing 25 nations.

The treaty was the result of 28 months of sometimes acrimonious debate between the 25 EU governments and now faces ratification in national parliaments. At least nine EU nations also plan to put it to a referendum, increasing chances that it may not take effect in 2007 as scheduled.

A "no" result in any country would stop the constitution in its tracks.

The EU leaders signed the document at the Campidoglio, a Michelangelo-designed complex of buildings on Rome's Capitoline Hill, along with the leaders of Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey and Croatia — four candidates for EU membership.

French President Jacques Chirac told reporters the constitution deepens "the roots of peace and democracy on our continent. For centuries and centuries we have fought each other and we have paid heavily with tears, blood and waste."

The event was overshadowed by a dispute over the makeup of the next EU executive — particularly over a conservative Italian nominee, Rocco Buttiglione, who is opposed by a large segment of



British Premier Tony Blair, left, talks to French President Jacques Chirac as they make their way to the signing ceremony of the EU constitution in Rome's Capitoline Hill on Friday.

the 732-member European Parliament.

On the margins of the signing, the leaders sought to resolve the dispute over Buttiglione, who was nominated as justice commissioner. The conservative Catholic and papal confidant raised concerns by saying he believed homosexuality is a sin and that women are better off married and at home.

The constitution foresees sim-

The European Union's first constitution was signed by EU leaders Friday in Rome. To take effect in 2007, it must be ratified by all 25 EU parliaments and the European Parliament. At least nine EU nations plan to put the charter to a referendum.

PREAMBLE: Europe is based on "equality of persons, freedom, respect for reason," and draws "inspiration from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe." It proclaims: "The people of Europe are determined to transcend their ancient divisions, and united ever more closely, to forge a common destiny."

CHARTER OF FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS: A 50-article charter enshrines rights including freedom of speech and religion, as well as the right to shelter, education, collective labor bargaining and fair working conditions.

SYMBOLS: Enshrines the EU flag — a circle of 12 golden stars on a blue background. Designates Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" as EU anthem.

Makes euro official currency. Provides for official motto: "United in Diversity." Proclaims May 9 Europe Day.

EUROPEAN PRESIDENT: Chosen by EU leaders for maximum five-year term to chair EU summits, represent EU abroad.

EUROPEAN FOREIGN MINISTER: New post.

pler voting rules to end decision gridlock in a club that ballooned to 25 members this year and plans to absorb half a dozen more in the years ahead.

It includes new powers for the European Parliament and ends national vetoes in 45 new policy

areas — including judicial and police cooperation, education and economic policy — but not in foreign and defense policy, social security, taxation or cultural matters.

"The seeming madness of our founding fathers has become a

Chairs EU foreign minister meetings; formulates policy on issues from terrorism to peacekeeping.

MORE MAJORITY VOTING: Ends national vetoes in almost 50 new policy areas, including judicial and police cooperation, education and economic policy.

Preserves requirement for unanimity in foreign and defense policy, social security, taxation and culture.

MORE 'FLEXIBLE' UNION: Makes it easier for some countries to opt out of EU policies they don't like. Or band together and forge ahead in integration without others being able to stop them. Allows nations to voluntarily leave bloc.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Currently 732 seats, the European Parliament will grow to a maximum of 750 members in the EU of 25 nations and when it expands further. The assembly gets more powers — especially in justice and interior affairs — to influence or reject EU legislation.

TRIMMING EUROPEAN COMMISSION: Cuts EU executive office from current 30 members to two-thirds of the number of member states, or 17, starting in 2014.

Commissioners will be selected on a rotation system among the 25 member states, and will sit for five-year terms.

— The Associated Press

Arafat arrives for treatment outside Paris

BY JOCELYN GECKER
The Associated Press

CLAMART, France — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, suffering from a serious but mysterious illness, was flown to France and rushed to a military hospital for treatment Friday — ending nearly three years of Israeli-imposed confinement at his battered West Bank compound.

The 75-year-old Arafat arrived on a French military jet at an airfield southwest of Paris and was taken by helicopter to the nearby Hôpital d'Instruction des Armées de Percy, landing on a rooftop helipad.

Paramedics carried Arafat on a stretcher from the roof into the hospital, with his wife, Suha, at his side.

Palestinian Civil Affairs Minister Jamil Tarifi, who was on the plane with Arafat, said his condition was "good, thank God."

"He was normal," Tarifi said.

The Percy hospital has a major trauma center and also specializes in the treatment of blood disorders, said Christian Estrépey, head of communications for military health services.

Arafat has been sick for the past two weeks and blood tests have revealed he has a low platelet count — a possible symptom of leukemia or other cancers or a number



Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat blows kisses Friday as he is helped out of a helicopter upon arriving in Amman, Jordan. Arafat has arrived in France and will be treated at a military hospital outside Paris, the French Defense Ministry said Friday.

of other maladies. Doctors said they need to run more tests to find the cause.

Arafat's personal physician, Dr. Ashraf Kurdi, ruled out leukemia on Thursday. However, an Arafat confidant, Dr. Ahmed Tibi, said Friday that "at this point, no possibility has been eliminated." Tibi, an Israeli Arab legislator, said Israeli intelligence officials have speculated that Arafat might be suffering from leukemia and he indicated that Arafat might have some symptoms of the disease.

Hours earlier, Arafat had a somber departure from his sandbagged Ramallah

headquarters, seen off by a few hundred loyalists gathered on a rain-slicked tarmac. At daybreak, Arafat, wearing a gray fur hat and an olive-colored jacket, was helped into a Jordanian military helicopter outside his headquarters.

He looked pale and jaundiced, but tried to smile as lobbyists whistled and chanted, "With our spirit and our blood, we will redeem you, Abu Ammar," using his nom de guerre.

Senior Palestinian officials were to hold a first round of meetings to discuss the situation Saturday. Arafat has persistently refused to appoint a successor and did not name a stand-in during his absence.

Germany house expands rights of gay couples

BY TONY CZUZKA
The Associated Press

BERLIN — German lawmakers Friday expanded the rights of same-sex couples, allowing registered domestic partners to adopt the other's child and bringing rules on spitting up and alimony in line with those for heterosexual marriages.

Parliament's lower house passed the changes drafted by Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's center-left government over the objections of opposition conservatives.

"This is a good day for gays and lesbians," Greens lawmaker Volker Beck told his colleagues. "We are making another step on the long road to equal rights."

The new law stops short of giving homosexuals who are legally recognized as couples under Germany's domestic partnership law full rights to adopt children. But if one of the partners has a child or brings one into the partnership, the other partner now can legally adopt the child if neither parent objects.

Before registering their partnership, gay couples will be able to get engaged as heterosexuals do, a step that grants certain legal rights in Germany, such as the right not to testify against one's partner in court.

Laws on separation, divorce, alimony and division of assets are also being extended to gay couples.

Although Germany does not permit gay marriage, about 5,000 gay couples have registered their civil partnerships in Germany under a law, pushed through by Schröder's government, that took effect on Aug. 1, 2001.

Muslims and Christians clash in Liberia

By JONATHAN PAYE-LAYLEH
The Associated Press

MONROVIA, Liberia — Mobs of angry youths brandishing machetes, sticks and Kalashnikov rifles rampaged through Liberia's war-shattered capital on Friday in a rare outbreak of Muslim-Christian violence, prompting the country's leader to order an immediate round-the-clock curfew.

Plumes of black smoke rose from Monrovia's eastern district of Paynesville, where U.N. peacekeepers in armored personnel

carriers fired in the air in a bid to maintain order, and U.N. helicopters rumbled overhead.

One U.N. armored vehicle that was trying to disperse a crowd inadvertently crushed and killed three people who had been knocked down as they tried to flee, a policeman in the area said on condition of anonymity. Crowds dispersed briefly, but congregated again later down the road after U.N. vehicles drove off.

At least three churches and two mosques in Paynesville were set ablaze after midnight, and several wounded people lay in the

streets, an Associated Press photographer on the scene said. One man, stabbed in the head with a knife, could be seen on a main road lying, apparently unconscious, in a pool of blood.

It was unclear what sparked the violence. About 40 percent of Liberia's 3.3 million people are Christians, while about 20 percent are Muslim. The rest follow indigenous beliefs.

In a statement broadcast over public and private radio stations, interim head of state Gyude Bryant said he was ordering an immediate curfew in Monrovia to pro-

tect "lives and properties" and called on residents to stay home.

"I have authorized the U.N. to use whatever force is necessary to get everybody off the streets. Anyone attempting to vandalize will be dealt with firmly and rigidly," he said.

"I am appealing to all of you to remain calm," he said. "We are determined to ensure that peace is restored."

Residents said troubles began early Thursday in Paynesville and spread west to an Atlantic Ocean port in the capital.

Some residents said five people had been killed in the violence.

The claims could not be verified independently, and government officials could not be reached for comment.

Violence had also reportedly spread to Kakata, 35 miles north of the capital, where two mosques were destroyed, said a local journalist who visited the site.

Mobs attempted to destroy a third mosque, but were stopped by peacekeeping troops deployed in the town, he said on condition of anonymity.

Associated Press photographer Pewee Fornku in Monrovia contributed to this report.



A security officer talks on a radio in front of a United Nations vehicle in which three kidnapped foreign staff members were riding in Kabul, Afghanistan, on Thursday. Armed men kidnapped the three election workers as they drove through in the Afghan capital, officials said.

Aid workers in Afghanistan lay low after 3 kidnappings

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON

The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — International aid workers kept a low profile Friday after the brazen daylight kidnapping of three foreign U.N. election staff in Kabul.

Police arrested seven suspects and cordoned off an area west of Kabul, Interior Ministry spokesman Latifullah Mashtal said. Three of the seven were armed men wearing military uniforms.

Mashtal said that interrogations of the suspects had established no link to Thursday's kidnapping, and another government official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said some were arrested to see if they could provide any leads.

The three foreigners were abducted from a marked U.N. vehicle around midday Thursday. Two of the victims were women, one with joint British-Irish nationality, and one from Kosovo. The third was a male diplomat from the Philippines. All work for a joint U.N.-Afghan commission overseeing landmark presidential elections.

The abductions came a week after a suicide attack killed an American woman and an Afghan teenager in the normally secure Afghan capital and ahead of final results due in the historic Oct. 9 poll.

U.S.-backed interim leader Hamid Karzai, who looks set to become the nation's first president-elect, condemned the abduction as "a criminal act... against the Afghan people, aimed at derailing the process of peace and prosperity."

A man claiming to speak for a Taliban splinter group, Jaish-al Muslimen, said it was responsible for the kidnappings but offered no proof it was holding the three.

Staff of aid agencies were told to restrict all but essential movements around Kabul, which is patrolled by thousands of NATO peacekeepers, making it usually one of the safest places in the country.

"It's an ominous development," said Paul Barker of the aid group CARE International. "We've not seen this kind of incident in Kabul before and I think we are still trying to figure out if it is a new trend or a one-off. Until it's resolved, we won't really know."

The three were abducted about a half mile from an election office in Kabul. Their Afghan driver, who was beaten and left behind, told investigators that about five armed men in uniform got out of a black four-wheel-drive vehicle that pulled in front of their U.N. vehicle.

Mashtal said the vehicle was seen heading toward Paghman, a district west of Kabul with a reputation for banditry. He said authorities obtained the license number of the vehicle but had yet to trace its owner. The car had tinted windows — something that requires a permit from the defense or interior ministries, he said.

In New York, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan said the world body was hoping for the abductees' "immediate and unconditional release."

Late Thursday, Iskhak Manzor, who claimed to speak for the Taliban splinter group, said it had staged the kidnapping and taken the three to a "safe place."

Allegations confuse Georgia vote results

By MISHA
DZHINDZHIKHASHVILI

The Associated Press

TBILISI, Georgia — Abkhazia's highest court annulled the results of the breakaway Georgian province's presidential election early Friday, just hours after declaring an opposition leader its winner.

The presiding judge said later that the annulment had been made under pressure and couldn't be considered legal, but that didn't stop the province's outgoing leader from calling new elections.

Judge George Akaba said he was forced to cancel the results of the Oct. 3 election when he was held hostage for hours by supporters of the losing side.

The Abkhazian Supreme Court ruled late Thursday that opposition leader Sergei Bagapsh had won the presidency with 50.32 percent of the vote in Oct. 3 election, upholding an earlier decision by the Central Election Commission.

But immediately after Akaba issued the verdict, several hundred supporters of former Prime Minister Raul Khadzimba rushed into the court building. Hours

later, Akaba read another ruling, declaring the vote void and ordering a new election to be held within two months.

Early Friday morning, Akaba called a news conference and said that the verdict canceling the vote was illegal because it was issued under severe pressure by Khadzimba's supporters.

"The second Supreme Court verdict was issued under pressure and can't be considered lawful," he said. "I was forced to make this decision because we were kept hostages for six hours."

Despite Akaba's statement, Abkhazia's outgoing President Vladislav Ardzimba later Friday ordered a new election. Bagapsh dismissed Ardzimba's decree as "illegal," saying a new election could be called only by the local parliament.

Bagapsh told The Associated Press the court's decision to annul the election results was supported after Khadzimba's supporters beat the judge and his lawyers.

"They beat Judge George Akaba and our lawyers and forced them to make a new decision under physical threat," Bagapsh said in a telephone interview. He said he would call for a criminal investigation.

Serbian: 17 mass graves hold many victims of Kosovo war

The Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia-Montenegro — There are 17 mass graves on Serbia's territory containing bodies of ethnic Albanians slain during Kosovo's 1998-99 war, a former interior minister said Friday, accusing the current authorities of a cover-up.

Dusan Mihajlovic, who served as police chief in the government which ousted former President Slobodan Milosevic in 2000, said Serbia's current conservative authorities are reluctant to prosecute those responsible for the killings.

Mihajlovic said in a statement that while he was in charge until early this year, "police have

done their part of the job. They have documentation about the crimes that were committed in Kosovo."

"You should ask the current authorities why nothing is being done about that," said Mihajlovic's statement, which was faxed to The Associated Press.

Police said they were investigating how the bodies, including those of women and children, were taken to central Serbia. The authorities also launched identification procedures, and about 300 bodies since have been returned to Kosovo.

Serbia's former acting President Nataša Micić, who also held the position until early this year, said she knew about the existence of the mass graves.

7-Eleven bonus

MI ESSEXVILLE — Oh, thank heaven: 7-Eleven employee Erin Kappen got a bonus for having a baby that weighed 7 pounds, 11 ounces.

Kappen cashed in on her son, Parker John VanWormer, who was born Oct. 4. She got a check for \$711 from Garb-Ko Inc., which operates the 7-Eleven store where she has worked part time for 18 months.

Saginaw-based Garb-Ko pays the \$711 bonus to any employee giving birth to a 7-pound, 11-ounce baby. It operates 90 stores in Michigan, nine in Indiana and eight in Ohio.

"It's not something that happens every day, but through the 26 years that I have been with this company, it has happened several times," said Larry Hauck, the company's marketing director.

Kappen, 22, of Bay City, said she hoped to use the gift money to open a bank account for Parker and pay some bills.

"Had no idea they were going to give me a check," said Kappen. "I never knew that they had a program like that."

Good rain, lots of deer

TX COLLEGE STATION — Experts say abundant rain in parts of Texas should make for a good deer season this fall and early winter. Texas Cooperative Extension reports the rain helped thicken the ground cover that provides food and shelter for the animals.

Officials said the deer are looking healthy. Texas is home to approximately 4 million deer, agency officials said.

Free travel for soldiers

NE GRAND ISLAND — A central Nebraska business is offering to pay travel expenses for a Hall County soldier's holiday leave. CBS Insurance will hold a drawing before Thanksgiving from the names of troops serving abroad. The military pays for a soldier on leave to return to home base, but travel home is a personal expense.

Bobby handles NY crime

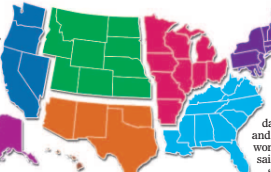
NY NEW YORK — An English police officer took a break from his vacation to fight crime and took home kudos from the NYPD's top cop.

Tourist Colin Webber and his wife and fellow bobby, Claire, were shopping in the city's Diamond District when they heard a violent clash inside a jewelry outlet.

Police said they believe two men were arguing over a counterfeit watch when one pulled a knife and stabbed the other man three times in the chest, then smashed a mirror over his head.

When the man with the knife tried to flee, the 6-foot-2 Webber instinctively tackled him and forced him to drop his weapon.

"There was really no time to think," the burly bobby said. "Someone said, 'Grab him,' and I did. ... I just took him down."



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly presented Webber, 37, with an award for his bravery a few hours before he was to board a flight home. The officer, wearing sweat pants and sneakers, accepted with a shrug.

The publicity, he quipped, "will probably cost me a round of beer" when he reports for duty on his regular beat.

After Webber subdued the suspect, friends of the victim began kicking the man in the head. Claire Webber, 38, was credited with keeping them at bay until officers arrived.

The alleged attacker was arrested and charged with attempted murder. The victim was in stable condition at a hospital.

Milk prices rise

HI HILO — The state Board of Agriculture gave its final approval to a proposal to raise the minimum price Big Island dairy farmers are paid for their milk by 25.8 cents per raw gallon.

The minimum, which has stood at \$2.02 since 1991, would rise to \$2.28, if Gov. Linda Lingle gives her final approval after the proposal is reviewed by several state departments, the Department of Agriculture said.

The increase, which would benefit five Big Island dairies, would not regulate the wholesale or retail prices of milk, which are set by a



Night shift work

Crane operator Lloyd Allen is silhouetted against the rising moon 185 feet above the Electric Power Board construction site in Chattanooga, Tenn.

milk processor and retailers, the department said.

"A cost production study by the Hawaii Department of Agriculture showed that this increase in the minimum price requested by Big Island dairy farmers was justified and appropriate," board chairwoman Sandra Lee Kunimoto said.

"The Big Island is the only island that is self-sufficient in milk and even sends milk to other islands, and it's crucial that we all support 'Island Fresh' milk, including retailers and consumers," she said.

The dairy farmers asked for the rate increase last December, and the board gave its preliminary approval in April. A public hearing on the issue was held Sept. 27.

The dairy farmers have noted their operational costs—including transportation and shipping, fuel, health insurance, workers' compensation, feed, utilities and labor—have risen over the years.

Secession on ballot

NJ VERONA — A referendum on next week's ballot asks voters whether they favor seceding from Essex County. Such a move would require approval by the Legislature, which even township officials call extremely unlikely. Critics say the votes amount to little more than a safety valve to let frustrated property owners vent about soaring property taxes.

Bath house art

AR HOT SPRINGS — The National Park Rotary Club heard a proposal to open a new Hot Springs Museum of Contemporary Art in one of the city's historic bath houses. The proposal includes a goal to collect 500 pieces from the world's top 500 artists. Hot Springs National Park Superintendent Josie Fernandez said she liked the plan, but funding must be secured.

Fork art goes missing

ND GRAND FORKS — It's an Unforgettable crime: Authorities in Grand Forks are searching for a grand fork.

The 6-foot-tall utensil that disappeared over is among about 50 in an "Unforgettable" collection scattered around the city.

Chamber of Commerce President Dan Schenkein says he saw the fork—which was decorated to look like a train—bolted to a special foundation. It was gone when another employee arrived, he said.

The missing fork was designed by artist Kim Dohman as a nod to the Chamber building's former life as a train depot.

"We continually have people coming down here [to see it]," Schenkein said. "It's really a fun community asset, and it's too bad somebody had to spoil it for others."

Schenkein hopes the fork was taken as a random prank and that someone will return it.

Businesses paid \$1,500 to purchase the forks. Most of the money went to benefit the project's sponsors, the Community Violence Intervention Center and a regional family health program.



Ghoulous scare

An unidentified ghoul scares Fort Walton Beach Jaycees' Haunted House visitors, front to back, Candace Tilley, Sydney Meldenson, 11, and Nikki Guillot, as they run through the scary room in Mary Esther, Fla.



Sheep mowers

A herd of grazing sheep are keeping the grass mowed on the capped landfill in Keene, N.H.



Two of a kind

Janet Hilton, of Panama City Beach, Fla., shows off her pet cockatoo Ze just before she won the pet-owner look-alike category at the Fantasy Fest Pet Masquerade and Parade in Key West, Fla.



Fun in the mud Michael Penner slides on his back after playing in a mud football game with other kids at his family's farm in Longview, Wash.



Grossed out A flopping trout put a fright into the faces of, from left, Alex Schaefer, 4, Annie Temple, 5, and Sam Carroll, 4, as Billie Thompson of the Johnson County Park Police tried to corral the fish at Heritage Park Lake in Overland Park, Kan.



Angel pooch Precious, an 18-year-old English mastiff, lies on the sidewalk dressed in an angel costume in Miami Beach, Fla. The dog's owner was handing out flyers for a local costume store.

Naming rights settlement

OH COLUMBUS — SBC Communications agreed to pay about \$1 million for the naming rights to the Ohio State-Michigan football game for the next two years. When the rivals meet for the 101st time on Nov. 20 in Columbus, the matchup will be called the SBC Michigan-Ohio State Classic.

Murky water is safe

UT DRAPER — Draper's water has acquired an odd color, odor and taste since heavy rains began, but health officials say it's still safe to drink. A manager for the company that serves nearly two-thirds of Draper likens the taste to tea made from fallen leaves. He said the coloration problem occurs in the fall when storm water soaks through leaves before entering the drinking water system.

Baby's parents charged

TX HOUSTON — The parents of a 2-month-old boy who died weighing only 5 pounds have been arrested.

Jolene Diana Valencia, 19, and Adrian Castillo, 21, were each charged with injury to a child by omission, said Sgt. Mike Smith of the Harris County Sheriff's Homicide Division. The baby, Saul Castillo, died at a Houston hospital.

Criminal complaints accuse the parents of failing to provide adequate food and medical care.

The couple took the infant to Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital at about 3 a.m. after finding him unresponsive and discolored at their apartment, Smith said. The parents, who said that the child had been eating, could not provide a valid explanation for the child's weight.

Growth charts showed the baby should have weighed 9 pounds, Smith said.

Doctors at the hospital, where the baby had been born premature, were unable to revive him, Smith said.

Besides the baby's emaciated state, there were no other obvious injuries to his body, authorities said.

Two other children in the family's home, 1- and 2-year-old boys, appeared to be in good condition and were taken into custody by Child Protective Services, a spokeswoman for the agency said.

Castillo's bail was set at \$50,000, and Valencia's is set at \$30,000.

Mentally ill man can't vote

MO JEFFERSON CITY — A federal judge declined to allow a mentally ill man to vote in next week's election but agreed to hear his challenge later to a Missouri law that denies voting rights to some who are mentally ill.

U.S. District Judge Ortrise Smith said presuming the man is competent to vote is risky and "any outcome that permits a potentially invalid ballot to be cast should be avoided."

Steven Prye said he moved to St. Louis from Illinois earlier this year and tried to register to vote, but wasn't allowed because he has a

court-appointed guardian in Illinois. A court is considering whether to appoint one for him in Missouri.

Under the Missouri Constitution and state law, those who have a guardian because of "mental incapacity" cannot vote and can face criminal charges if they do.

The suit alleges the Missouri election law violates the U.S. Constitution's due process and equal protection clauses and the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

According to the lawsuit, the 51-year-old Prye is a former law professor with schizophrenia disorder who has had a guardian since December 2003. The suit says Prye taught at Vermont Law School and the University of Illinois Law School The Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law and the American Civil Liberties Union are helping represent Prye.

The Bazelon Center said the suit could have national implications.

State logo, slogan vote

KY FRANKFORT — Kentucky's new logo and slogan will be decided by a public vote, and it could be a close horse race.

That's because three of the four choices involve images of horses: "Kentucky: Unbridled Spirit," "Kentucky: Limitless," and "Kentucky: Where Legends Are Born." The only non-equine choice is "Kentucky: Make History."

Gov. Ernie Fletcher announced that people will be able to vote over the Internet, through the mail or in person at welcome centers, resort parks and tourist attractions around the state.

Each week, the candidate with the least amount of votes will be eliminated, until the final one is decided the day before Thanksgiving. The contest is open to residents and nonresidents alike.

City contract corruption

CT STAMFORD — State investigators probing possible corruption are looking into city contracts and scrutinizing renovation work at the mayor's home. The AP has learned.

Investigators with the Chief State's Attorney's office have requested details on city and school contracts dating back five years, according to sources familiar with the investigation, which spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The inquiry involved about 200 requests issued by the city for proposals, according to Ben Barnes, the city's director of administration.

The sources said investigators are also looking into contracts for the management of a city-owned nursing home and the operation of a cafeteria in a government building — projects for which Republicans claim the winning bidders contributed to Mayor Daniel Malloy's upcoming Democratic gubernatorial campaign.

Malloy, 49, who is running for governor in 2006, asked city officials earlier this month to seek new bids on those contracts.

Malloy — the city's longest serving mayor, since 1995 — has denied any wrongdoing and said he welcomes the inquiry.

Stories and photos from wire services

FACES

Combs disappointed by Bush, Kerry

Sean "P. Diddy" Combs is ready to play travel agent for presidential candidates.

During his swing state Vote or Die! tour, the 34-year-old hip-hop mogul said he was disappointed President Bush and Democratic nominee John Kerry aren't stopping in urban areas during their campaigns.

"If you look at the campaign schedules, they're not making time for these people," Combs said during a stop in Detroit.

Combs said both Bush and Kerry have used their daughters to reach young voters. Alexandra and Vanessa Kerry were guests on MTV's "TRL," and Jenna and Barbara Bush have been stopping at college campuses on a Students for Bush tour. All four appeared at the MTV Video Music Awards to promote their fathers.

But Combs said it wasn't enough. "I'm not knocking what their daughters are doing, but it ain't nothing like seeing the men themselves," Combs said.



Combs

Ambassador Jolie visits Sudan

Angelina Jolie, visiting Sudan in her role as U.N. goodwill ambassador, said it's too soon for refugees from western Sudan to return to their homes, as the government is urging.

"Return, I believe, is what the government wants to see happen. We all like to see that happen. But from the sense I got from the people and from my observations during this visit, it clearly is not the time," the Oscar-winning actress said.

She said an officer from the African Union troops monitoring the situation in Darfur told her that a village had been raided and destroyed.

Jolie also said she was told of a woman and her 12-year-old daughter who were raped repeatedly.

Jolie said such accounts are "shocking and horrifying and showed very clearly that there is no stability yet."

"This is the worst situation I have seen," she said, during her visits to about 20 countries across the world as U.N. goodwill ambassador.

S. Africa network gets 'Fahrenheit 9/11'

An independent television channel in South Africa will air Michael Moore's documentary 'Fahrenheit 9/11' on the eve of the U.S. presidential elections.

Following the Nov. 1 showing, M-Net will feature a panel discussion broadcast from its Johannesburg studio. M-Net, the country's first pay channel, secured the rights for one exclusive screening from the film's distributors, Paramount, in their time.

"This is the earliest time in the history of South African television a movie will be broadcast on television while it is still on the circuit," Jan du Plessis, head of M-Net's program division, said in a statement.

"But 'Fahrenheit 9/11' has broken many rules and conventions, and we're delighted that we got permission to screen it at such an opportune time."

Vegas veteran gets another star

Wayne Newton now has two stars.

The 62-year-old singer was the first person inducted into the Las Vegas Walk of Stars during a ceremony.

The dedication took place at the New Frontier Hotel, where "Mr. Las Vegas" performed for about 15 years. He can now be seen singing "Danke Schoen" at the Stardust hotel-casino.

Newton's star will be installed on Las Vegas Boulevard in front of the hotel-casino.

The star, like others in the future, will be a 3-foot square slab of polished granite weighing 350 pounds and inscribed with the recipient's name and specialty.

The Motion Picture Hall of Fame Foundation launched the project, which is similar to the one found in Hollywood, where Newton also has a star.

Stories and photos from wire services

Hard-working Walken tries on a lead role

BY GLENN LOVELL

San Jose Mercury News

SAN FRANCISCO — Christopher Walken works a lot. As best he can figure, he has made "about a hundred movies" since appearing in "Annie Hall" and "The Deer Hunter" in the late '70s. That's an astounding number, given that the average Hollywood star makes one film, possibly two, every 18 months or so.

"Work? It's my favorite thing to do, and I don't really have anything else that I do," says Walken, 61, during a stopover in San Francisco to talk up "Around the Bend," an oddball reunion picture in which, for the first time, he plays a grandfather — with an unimpressive past of course.

"I don't have kids, I don't have hobbies," continues the actor, who commutes between movie sets and homes in New York and Connecticut.

"And I don't play golf. A lot of actors play golf. It's amazing how many actors play golf."

Here, Walken's voice trails off, as it does frequently during our conversation. Is this an affectation, that studied insouciance that has caused him to be typed as dangerous crazies ("At Close Range," "True Romance") or comic crazies ("Mouse Hunt," "The Stepford Wives")?

Or is it something more, a hint of wistfulness for the road not taken? Before you start feeling sorry for the guy, consider this: He's having a blast. He loves the monetary rewards and adoration that come with being Hollywood's most in-demand character actor. This afternoon he shares a story about an airport baggage handler who turned out to be a huge fan.

Of Walken's psychologically damaged Vietnam vet in "The Deer Hunter," which brought the supporting-actor Oscar in 1978? Or maybe of his broken father in "Catch Me If You Can," which brought another Oscar nomination in 2002?

Walken smiles that slow, mischievous smile. (Fans of "The Continental," his serial seducer on "Saturday Night Live," will know it only too well.) "No, no — this guy was shouting, 'Frank White! Frank White!'" Walken recalls. "That's the character I played in 'King of New York.' They don't talk about 'Deer Hunter'; they talk about this little crime movie, and it was really off-the-cuff stuff where we literally said, 'What are you going to say next? All right, then I'll say this.' That usually doesn't work, but we had Laurence Fishburne, Wesley Snipes and David Caruso, and it was good."

Other memorably quirky Walken performances include "Pale Piction," "At Close Range," "Batman Returns," "The Dead Zone" and, of course, "True Romance," where his sadistic crime boss shares the screen with another great scene-stealer, Dennis Hopper. The pair went to dinner after work. Hopper: "We did a good scene today." Walken: "Yes, I know."

Walken felt the same way after the kitchen face-off in "At Close Range," where Sean Penn as the son puts a gun to his father's head.

Just before shooting the scene, Penn said, "Excuse me for one sec-

ond," and left the room. "He knew how scared I am of guns, and he made me think he had returned with a loaded gun. You can see the fear in my face," Walken says.

It ranks as one of the most intense father-son confrontations ever shot.

Adds Walken now: "That was a very generous thing for Sean to do. Actors help each other like that. When I saw the scene, I knew we had nailed it. That's a great feeling — exhilarating."

But to have the kind of career Walken has had (he went from character roles to leads in "Dead Zone" and "Dogs of War," then back to character parts), you have to love what you do.

"I do enjoy my work — I tend to be someone who enjoys himself," he says. "The fact is, when you get to be old and you've been around as long as I have, if people don't recognize you, come up and say hello, you start to worry."

Then, too, he worries about working too much, not being selective enough in his roles.

"There's something to be said for being selective. There are actors who believe in that. They wait for the material and the director. ... They want all the elements to be as apocryphal as possible. But I have never been that way."

Walken attributes his work ethic to his father, who was a baker in Queens, N.Y.

"I'm probably the way I am because of my father," the actor says. "He went to his bakery seven days a week. He loved baking; he couldn't get enough of it."

They were close, unlike two generations of fathers and sons in "Around the Bend," which finds Michael Caine playing Walken's dad.

Despite an onerous, anti-social streak, Walken's character in the new film turns out to be a relatively nice guy. Ditto his characters in "Man on Fire" and "Catch Me If You Can." Is this the dawning of a kinder, gentler Walken? "Could be," he replies.

"But it also has something to do with age. I'm now at the place where I'm starting to play fathers and uncles — and, in this case, a grandfather."

Worse, a grandfather who's dying of kidney failure. Hence, the gray-green cast to his skin.

"I saw the movie and I thought, 'Geez, you look terrible.'"

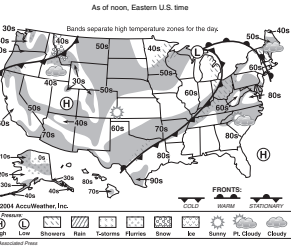
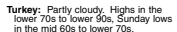
He pauses, beams, then concedes, "But it's a big juicy part."

It's a leading part. And I don't do that a lot."

Christopher Walken stars as Turner in Jordan Roberts' "Around the Bend," from Warner Independent Pictures.

Courtesy of Warner Bros.





STARS AND STRIPES®
Your Hometown Newspaper

Horoscope

Lucky Jupiter and dreamy Neptune are featured, and the question that arises is: What is good luck anyway? The answer is, it's really too soon to tell. An event that appears on the surface to be negative or neutral winds up being a blessing two or three moves into the game.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(Oct. 30): You've got so much to give that loved ones flock to you! In the coming year, your life will be centered on home and family. Some of you will move into a new house in April. Others will remodel, redecorate or repair. Get ready to do lots of entertaining, especially dinner parties. A mother figure in your life will require more of your attention.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Stop talking, and start doing. The opportunity of a lifetime could be within your grasp, but you're never going to know for sure unless you give it your best shot.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Get ready for winter — there's much to do before the next frost. Speaking of frost, a certain someone in your life who's been giving you the cold shoulder will now be more receptive to your warm and friendly vibe.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21): Finally, things slow down to a pace you can handle — or, better, savor. Precious moments with loved ones make you realize how lucky you are. People compete for your favor. Deal equally with everyone, and you'll be respected.

CANCER (June 22-July 22): You can be a master manipulator when you really want to be. In fact, it comes so naturally to you that sometimes you don't even know you're doing it! Today, pay careful attention to what you say and how you say it.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You could become disillusioned with a situation, but this is merely a sign

that you had fantastically high hopes at one time. Maybe it's too early to give those up.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

Everything you do today, you do for the love of it. Because you have no other agenda, you're extraordinarily lucky in your pursuits.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): It's easy to get so caught up in being busy that you're taking part in activities that do absolutely nothing to feed your soul. Meanwhile, your talents are so underused, you've forgotten that you possess them.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): You're invigorated. Is it the idea that you could have more out of life that pushes you to strive, or is it the sheer act of striving that makes you feel vital? Either way, you're in an expansive mood.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): There is a delicate balance at work in relationships, and you're in just the mood to upset that balance. Why? For the sake of change, adventure and mischief. Be careful.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Events set in motion, or is it the other way around? It's hard to say whether you are reacting to the world or it is reacting to you, but the one thing you know for sure is that you've got incredible momentum.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Finally, things slow down to a pace you can handle — or, better, savor. Precious moments with loved ones make you realize how lucky you are. People compete for your favor. Deal equally with everyone, and you'll be respected.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): It's frustrating if you don't have the time to do what you love. But don't wait until you've got large blocks of hours to devote to your passion. Steal the moments you do have. You'll be amazed what 20 minutes can bring.

Creators Syndicate

Joyce Jillson



Calvin and Hobbes

OH, GREAT ALTAR OF PASSIVE ENTERTAINMENT...



BESTION UPON ME, THAT DISGRACED IMAGES AT SUCH SPEED AS TO RENDER LINGER THOUGHT IMPOSSIBLE!



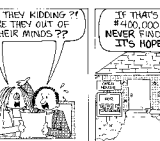
Jump Start



Zits



Cathy



Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



Better or Worse



To our readers

For the past decade, this column has been written by Joyce Jillson and Holiday Mathis. Ms. Jillson passed away on Oct. 1. Because Ms. Jillson and Ms. Mathis wrote in advance, columns they prepared will run through Nov. 6. Beginning Nov. 7, the horoscopes will be renamed "Horoscopes by Holiday" and will be authored by Ms. Mathis.

Peanuts



Mourning, party tough to balance

Dear Abby: My 56-year-old mother passed away suddenly six months ago. It happened two days before my daughter's fifth birthday. I didn't know what to do when Mom died — cancel or let my daughter have the party Mom and I had planned. Well, I opted to go on with the celebration.

My dad just couldn't face it. He left the house. I know in my heart that Mom would not have wanted us to cancel her granddaughter's party. I loved my mom dearly and would never have done anything disrespectful to her memory. I miss her very much. She was my best friend, and it's hard going through life without her.

Did I do the right thing?

—Missing My Mom in Maine

Dear Missing: You did the right thing in going ahead with the party. I see no reason why a child of 5 should be forced to

associate her special day with death and mourning if it's avoidable.

Dear Abby: I am a concerned parent. My children attend a school that has a very tight budget. The school system here cannot afford to hire teacher's aides, so I help out as much as I can.

Abby, it's crucial for parents to volunteer as much of their time as they can to help teachers. Even one hour a month would be helpful.

I know several mothers who trade baby-sitting for their free time to go to the gym or shop, but they never give a thought to volunteering at the school. I swap baby-sitting duties with a friend so I can do those things, too, but we also make the time to help our children's teachers.

Our children and their educa-

tion should be our No. 1 priority. Would you please help me encourage parents everywhere to volunteer their time at schools? Thank you.

—Volunteer Mom in Princeton, Minn.

Dear Mom: Many schools are in crisis because of budget constraints and could use a helping hand from parents.

Volunteering in schools not only allows the teachers to dedicate more time to teaching, but it also sets a good example for the children. Children of parents who are concerned about, and immediately involved in, their education earn better grades. Everyone benefits.

I know from personal experience how rewarding volunteering can be. Every time I have volunteered, I got more than I gave.

For this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can email to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.uspspress.com/dearabby> Universal Press Syndicate



Dear Abby

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

CHARP

TAUDI

NIRFIM

TESGAK

Print answer here:

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argiron



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers Monday)

Yesterday's Jumbles: SHAKY CURRY MOSQUE BUBBLE Answer: A teen's room is often in this shape — SQUARE

Temperamental grandson a worry

Dear Annie: I have a 6-year-old grandson.

"Liam." His parents have been divorced for three years, and Liam is in therapy to help him deal with this.

Liam is very rude to me. When I picked him up for a recent outing, he behaved terribly and said he wanted to stay home and play with his mother. His parents don't believe in spanking, or any kind of discipline, as far as I can determine. The boy was allowed to continue this behavior, and not once was he told to apologize. I finally left.

It hurts to be treated this way. Also, I recently remarked, "While most children love my husband, Liam tells his parents he's 'uncomfortable' around him. There is no basis for this except that my husband once told Liam he needed to respond when spoken to."

I love Liam dearly, but he has been mourning an affectioned boy. He doesn't give hugs or ever say "I love you." Should I continue to

see Liam? Whatever I decide it's going to be very painful for me.

—Forlorn Grandma

Dear Grandma: Liam is only 6, and his parents are divorced. This child has enough to deal with. Liam's behavior is perfectly understandable, especially since you were under tremendous stress for several years and could not create a closer bond. And now that you have remarried, your situation feels somewhat strange for the boy.

Yes, Liam should be taught to behave more politely, but don't blame him for what his parents neglect to do.

Dear Annie: I read the letter from "Wife and Stepmom." Although she had some wonderful ideas, such as a family night, I disagree with a few of her rules, namely that parents should discipline only their own children and that finances should be kept

separate. In a real family, both parents discipline the kids, and decisions about discipline and finances work better when they are made together.

However, one important rule "Stepmom" did have is never to say a bad word about the spouse's ex in front of the kids. Our kids are grown now and tell us that they respect our opinions more because we never tried to make them take sides.

—Experienced Stepmom in Connecticut

Dear Stepmom: Many readers wrote to say that stepparents should be allowed to discipline each other's children, and that finances should be shared. We think those are decisions each family makes on its own.

What works for one family may not work for another. But we appreciate your knowledgeable input.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please e-mail your questions to anniesmailbox@comcast.net, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 3777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles CA 90048. Creators Syndicate



Annie's Mailbox



"I'm Old Father Time. I'm here tonight to set your clocks back, except in Arizona, parts of Indiana, and ..."



Dennis the Menace



© Gary Larson The Far Side



Non Sequitur



10-30

SCOREBOARD

AFN TV & Radio

Saturday

AFN-Sports, 8:30 a.m.—Air Force Football with Fisher De Berry (cdd)
AFN-Sports, 9 a.m.—College football: Hawaii at Boise State (cdd)
AFN-Radio, 8 p.m.—College football: Penn St. at Ohio St.
AFN-Sports, 8:30 p.m.—College football: Oklahoma at Oklahoma St.
AFN-Sports, 8:30 p.m.—College football: Tennessee at South Carolina
AFN-Sports, 8:30 p.m.—College football: Michigan at Michigan St.
AFN-Sports, 8:30 p.m.—College football: Florida vs. Colorado
AFN-Sports, 10 p.m.—College football: Texas at Georgia

Sunday

AFN-Sports, 7 a.m.—Auto racing: Busch Series (Laurin's 312 cdd)
AFN-Sports, 11 a.m.—College football: Miami at North Carolina (cdd)
AFN-Radio, 11 a.m.—College football: Carolina at Arizona St.
AFN-Sports, 6:30 p.m.—Auto racing: Nextel Cup (Shane's 306 cdd)
AFN-Radio, 7 p.m.—NFL: Baltimore at Philadelphia
AFN-Radio, 7 p.m.—NFL: N.Y. Giants at Minnesota
AFN-Radio, 7 p.m.—NFL: Teams TB
AFN-Radio, 10 p.m.—NFL: New England at Pittsburgh
AFN-Radio, 10 p.m.—NFL: Atlanta at Denver
AFN-Radio, 10 p.m.—NFL: Teams TB
AFN-Radio, 10:30 p.m.—NFL: Carolina at Seattle

All times are Central European Time (det. indicates delayed broadcast). All listings are subject to change. Some radio broadcasts not available in all areas. Visit www.afn.net for more information.

Pro football

NFL

AMERICAN CONFERENCE									
East									
	W	L	T	Pct	PP	PA			
New England	9	0	0	1.000	148	99			
N.Y. Jets	1	0	0	.833	127	102			
Buffalo	1	0	0	.167	77	121			
Jacksonville	1	0	0	.000	88	111			
South									
	W	L	T	Pct	PP	PA			
Tennessee	4	0	0	.769	122	136			
Indianapolis	3	0	0	.667	134	118			
Atlanta	3	0	0	.600	138	127			
Tennessee	2	0	0	.556	128	158			
West									
	W	L	T	Pct	PP	PA			
Pittsburgh	5	0	0	.833	136	114			
San Diego	4	0	0	.800	138	127			
Cleveland	4	0	0	.778	117	145			
Cincinnati	4	0	0	.714	109	141			
National Conference									
East									
	W	L	T	Pct	PP	PA			
Philadelphia	4	0	0	1.000	171	100			
N.Y. Giants	4	0	0	.909	117	105			
Dallas	2	0	0	.333	94	95			
South									
	W	L	T	Pct	PP	PA			
Atlanta	2	0	0	.714	129	142			
New Orleans	2	0	0	.591	159	151			
Tampa Bay	2	0	0	.500	138	121			
Carolina	2	0	0	.455	137	135			
North									
	W	L	T	Pct	PP	PA			
Pittsburgh	2	0	0	.667	116	123			
Detroit	2	0	0	.600	118	123			
Green Bay	2	0	0	.571	158	108			
West									
	W	L	T	Pct	PP	PA			
St. Louis	3	0	0	.857	185	106			
Atlanta	3	0	0	.833	174	110			
San Francisco	2	0	0	.714	105	159			

Sunday's games

Detroit 28, N.Y. Giants 13
 Carolina 24, Tampa Bay 16
 Philadelphia 34, Cleveland 31 OT
 Tennessee 24, New England 14
 New England 13, N.Y. Jets 7
 Dallas 21, Oakland 20
 Arizona 25, Seattle 17
 Oakland 31, Oakland 25
 Open: Pittsburgh, Washington, San Francisco
 Cincinnati 21, Baltimore 16
 Monday's game
 Detroit at Buffalo
 Arizona at Atlanta
 Cincinnati at Houston
 Indianapolis at Kansas City
 Baltimore at Philadelphia
 N.Y. Giants at Minnesota
 Carolina at Seattle
 Atlanta at Denver
 Oakland at San Diego
 New England at Pittsburgh
 San Francisco at Chicago
 Open: Tampa Bay, St. Louis, New Orleans, Cleveland
 Monday, Nov. 1
 Miami at N.Y. Jets

College football

AP Top 25 rated

How the college football poll fared Thursday:
 No. 1 team Cal (10-0) moved up to No. 2 at Washington State, Saturday.
 No. 2 Alabama (7-0) moved up to No. 1 at No. 20 Oklahoma State, Saturday.
 No. 3 Auburn (6-0) did not play. Next: at Mississippi, Saturday.

No. 4 Miami (6-0) did not play. Next: at North Carolina, Saturday.
 No. 5 Florida State (5-0) did not play. Next: at Maryland, Saturday.
 No. 6 Wisconsin (5-0) did not play. Next: vs. No. 24 Minnesota, Nov. 6.
 No. 7 Texas Tech (5-0) did not play. Next: vs. No. 20 Arizona State, Saturday.
 No. 8 Iowa State (5-0) did not play. Next: at Colorado, Saturday.
 No. 9 LSU (5-0) did not play. Next: at San Diego State, Saturday.
 No. 10 Georgia (6-1) did not play. Next: vs. Florida, Saturday.
 No. 11 Tennessee (6-1) did not play. Next: at Florida, Saturday.
 No. 12 Michigan (7-1) did not play. Next: vs. North Carolina, Saturday.
 No. 13 Virginia (6-1) did not play. Next: at Maryland, Nov. 6.
 No. 14 Louisville (5-1) did not play. Next: at Memphis, Nov. 6.
 No. 15 West Virginia (6-1) did not play. Next: at Rutgers, Saturday.
 No. 16 New Jersey (5-0) did not play. Next: at Baylor, Saturday.
 No. 17 Purdue (5-2) did not play. Next: at Northwestern, Saturday.
 No. 18 Boise State (7-0) did not play. Next: vs. Hawaii, Friday.
 No. 19 Iowa State (7-0) did not play. Next: vs. Vanderbilt, Saturday.
 No. 20 Arizona State (6-1) did not play. Next: at No. 7 California, Saturday.
 No. 20 Oklahoma State (5-1) did not play. Next: at Texas Tech, Saturday.
 No. 22 Virginia Tech (6-2) beat Georgia Tech, 31-10, at North Carolina, Nov. 6.
 No. 23 Iowa (5-2) did not play. Next: at Illinois, Saturday.
 No. 24 Minnesota (6-1) did not play. Next: at Arizona, Saturday.
 No. 25 Southern Mississippi (5-1) did not play. Next: vs. Cincinnati, Nov. 6.

Thursday
No. 22 Virginia Tech 34,
Georgia Tech 20

Virginia Tech 34, Georgia Tech 20
 Second Quarter
 GT—Johnson 9 pass from Ball (Bell kick), 9:46.
 VT—Daniels 13 pass from Bell (kick), 9:00.
 GT—Cowan 34 run from Randall (Pace kick), 5:14.
 GT—FG Bell, 46, runs out of end zone, 4:09.
 Third Quarter
 VT—Safety, Ball runs out of end zone, 4:09.
 VT—FG Pace 30, 1:11.
 GT—FG Pace 34, pass from Randall (Randall pass from Johnson), 5:28.
 VT—Morgan 51 pass from Randall (Pace kick), 3:10.
 VT—Morgan 64 interception return (Pace kick), 5:56.
 A-46,398.

First downs 17 19
 Rushing yards 104 179
 Passing yards 183-1 142-2
 Return yards 79 38
 Punt-Avg 64-27 64-8
 Fumbles-Lost 2-2 4-2
 Penalties-Yards 10-38 10-38
 Time of Possession 28:13 31:47

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS
 Rushing—Virginia Tech, Iron 2:27, 31-yard, 6-64; Humes 1-3, team 1-minus 2; Randall 1-3, Grant 2-minus 4.
 Passing—Virginia Tech, Randall 14-29-171, 31-304, Georgia Tech, Ball 14-29-179.
 Receiving—Virginia Tech, Humes 4-65, Royal 3-81, Hyman 3-34, Ipin 3-64, Morgan 1-10, Williams 1-10, Williams 1-4, Gentry 1-4, Georgia Tech, Curry 4-51, Coleman 4-51, Williams 4-25, Woods 2-10, Bilbo 2-11.

Pro soccer

Major League Soccer playoffs

Conference Semifinals
 (Two-leg Aggregate Score Series)
 Eastern Conference
 Columbus vs. New England
 Saturday, Oct. 31
 New England 1, Columbus 0, New England leads series 2-0
 D.C. United vs. MetroStars
 Saturday, Oct. 31
 D.C. United 1, MetroStars 0, D.C. United leads series 2-0

TANK MCNAMARA

PRO AND COLLEGE TEAMS ARE NEGOTIATING WITH THE TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION TO GET AN EXTENSIVE SCREENING OF PASSENGERS ON TEAM CHARTERS.

Saturday, Oct. 30
Western Conference
 Kansas City at San Jose leads series 2-0
Saturday, Oct. 31
 San Jose at Kansas City
Saturday, Oct. 31
 Colorado 1, Los Angeles, Colorado leads series 1-0
Saturday, Oct. 30
 Colorado at Los Angeles

Pro basketball

NBA preseason EASTERN CONFERENCE Atlantic Division

	W	L	T	Pct	GB
Philadelphia	1	0	0	.500	0
New York	1	0	0	.500	0
New Jersey	1	0	0	.500	0
Boston	1	0	0	.500	0
Toronto	1	0	0	.500	0
Southeast Division					
	W	L	T	Pct	GB
Miami	1	0	0	.500	0
Orlando	1	0	0	.500	0
Charlotte	1	0	0	.500	0
Washington	1	0	0	.500	0
Atlanta	1	0	0	.500	0
Central Division					
	W	L	T	Pct	GB
Cleveland	1	0	0	.500	0
Memphis	1	0	0	.500	0
Milwaukee	1	0	0	.500	0
Chicago	1	0	0	.500	0

WESTERN CONFERENCE Southwest Division

	W	L	T	Pct	GB
Houston	1	0	0	.500	0
Portland	1	0	0	.500	0
San Antonio	1	0	0	.500	0
Utah	1	0	0	.500	0
Seattle	1	0	0	.500	0

Northwest Division

	W	L	T	Pct	GB
Denver	1	0	0	.500	0
Portland	1	0	0	.500	0
Minnesota	1	0	0	.500	0
Utah	1	0	0	.500	0
Seattle	1	0	0	.500	0

Phoenix
 LA Lakers
 Golden State
 Phoenix 16, LA Clippers 10
 LA Clippers

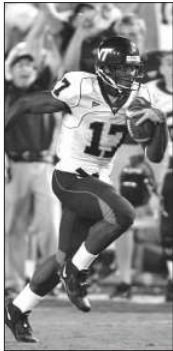
Wednesday's game
 Orlando 95, Miami 103
Thursday's games
 Indiana 91, Chicago 71
 Phoenix 16, LA Clippers 10
 San Antonio 79, Houston 69
 Golden State 82, LA Clippers 78
 Cleveland 99, Atlanta 94
 New Jersey 96, Philadelphia 94
 Memphis 95, Milwaukee 88
 Denver 93, Houston 88
 Dallas 112, Sacramento 93
 LA Lakers 97, Washington 87
 Phoenix 16, LA Clippers 10

Friday's games
 Cleveland at Atlanta
 Denver at Indiana
 New Orleans at San Antonio
 Phoenix at Sacramento
 Phoenix at Sacramento

End of preseason
Tennis
Swiss Indoors
Thursday
 At St. Jakobshallen
 Swiss-Curve Indoor
 Purser: \$125,000 (int. Series)
First Round
 Boban Ullrich, Czech Republic, def. Ullrich, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4
 Heuberger, Switzerland, def. Heuberger, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4
 (1) Argentina, 6-1, 6-3, 6-3
 (2) Britain, 6-1, 6-3, 6-3
 Woodley, def. Woodley, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4
 (3) France, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4
 (4) Spain, 6-4, 6-4, 6-4
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No. 22 Va. Tech rallies past Georgia Tech

25-point fourth quarter keeps Hokies in running for ACC championship



Virginia Tech wide receiver Josh Morgan heads for the go-ahead touchdown on a 51-yard pass from Bryan Randall on Thursday night. Virginia Tech won 34-20.

BY PAUL NEWBERRY
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — If Virginia Tech goes on to win the Atlantic Coast Conference, remember the last 5½ minutes at Georgia Tech. For most of the game, the Hokies couldn't do anything right.

Then, in a stunning turnaround, they could do no wrong. Bryan Randall threw two long touchdown passes and Roland Minor finished off the Yellow Jackets with a 64-yard interception return, rallying No. 22 Virginia Tech to a wild 34-20 victory Thursday night.

For the Hokies (6-2, 3-1 ACC), this was a crucial victory. They remained one game behind Miami in the loss column, with a season-ending game against the Hurricanes at the Orange Bowl.

"This is one of those wins that is great for your football program," coach Frank Beamer said. "I hope we build on it. The way we did it, the way we hung in there, we never gave up."

Randall passed for 304 yards, also hooking up with David Clowney on a 34-yard touchdown in the second quarter.

Randall really shined at the end.

He threw an 80-yard scoring pass to Eddie Royal with 5:28 remaining, then completed a desperation pass for the tying two-point conversion.

"When we tied it, we knew we had the momentum," Randall said.

"We didn't think our defense would give up any more points," Georgia Tech's did. On the Hokies' next series, Randall ran for 32 yards, then connected with Josh Morgan for a 51-yard TD with 3:10 remaining.

Minor, a redshirt freshman, intercepted two passes by Reggie Ball in the final 2½ minutes, returning the second for the touchdown that capped a 25-point fourth quarter by the Hokies.

Georgia Tech (4-3, 3-3) scored two touchdowns less than a minute apart in the second quarter for a 14-0 lead. But the Yellow Jackets couldn't hold it, their highly ranked defense falling apart in the final period.

After giving up a total of 265 yards in its two previous games, the Yellow Jackets were burned for 446 yards in this one.

"It hurts to let one get away like this, where we thought we were in pretty good shape going into the fourth quarter," coach Chan

Gailey said. "We gave up some big plays and just couldn't sustain anything offensively."

Randall completed 18 of 31 passes and also played a big role in the running game, accounting for 64 yards on nine carries.

Georgia Tech was still looking good after Travis Bell kicked his second field goal, a 34-yarder with 5:44 remaining for a 20-12 lead.

"Things were going wrong," Virginia Tech coach Frank Beamer said. "It looked like every time things were turning around for us, we did something else."

But the Hokies managed to survive on a foggy, wacky night in downtown Atlanta. The teams combined for seven turnovers, 173 yards in penalties and plenty of head-scratching plays.

Ball inexplicably ran out of the back of the end zone in the third quarter to give Virginia Tech a safety. The Hokies had to settle for a field goal early in the fourth after having first and goal inside the Georgia Tech 1.

In the first half, the teams spent plenty of time giving each other the ball.

Randall fumbled deep in Georgia Tech territory, while Georgia Tech's star running back, P.J.

Daniels, lost the ball twice on the Hokies side of the field.

After Daniels' second fumble, Randall gave the ball right back to an ill-advised pass over the middle that was picked off by Butler and returned to the Hokies 39.

Finally, someone took advantage. Ball threw a 27-yard pass to Nate Curry, then hooked up with Calvin Johnson in the back of the end zone for a 9-yard touchdown.

Virginia Tech couldn't even get its offense back on the field. On the ensuing kickoff, Royal was hit from behind and fumbled, with Georgia Tech's Jamal Lewis recovering at the Hokies 28.

Ball completed a 15-yard pass to Darius Williams, then Daniels redeemed himself for the fumbles with a 13-scoring run that made the 14-10 tie. The TDs came just 46 seconds apart.

Bell's 46-yard field goal with 35 seconds left in the first half sent Georgia Tech to the locker room with a 17-7 lead.

"To come back after that, boy, it took some big-time players," Beamer said.

No one was bigger than Randall, who called it "one of the best moments of my career."

And one that might be worth remembering at the end of the season.

Cal not spending time calculating BCS chances

With four favorable matchups remaining, first Rose Bowl in 45 years among the possibilities for No. 7 Golden Bears

BY GREG BEACHAM
The Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. — Though they attend one of the nation's most prestigious public universities, don't ask California's football players to decipher their chances of playing in a Bowl Championship Series game.

"I think you have to go to grad school for that," defensive end Tom Sverchek said. "We're not going to even try. If we get too caught up in looking ahead to January and lose right now, it won't matter."

The seventh-ranked Golden Bears (5-1, 3-4 Pac-10) still have plenty of work to do. But after years of mediocrity and turmoil at Cal, it's becoming difficult to avoid thoughts of the school's first New Year's Day bowl since the 1991 season — particularly a chance at Cal's first trip to the Rose Bowl in 45 years.

Starting in Saturday night's meeting with No. 20 Arizona State, Cal finishes its conference schedule with three home games and a trip to lovely Washington. The Bears should be a heavy favorite in all four, as well as their hurricane-postponed trip to Southern Mississippi in December.

They're eighth in the current BCS rankings, though those numbers won't mean much until the season ends. If Southern California also wins out and reaches the



Cal's Jonathan Makonnen celebrates after scoring during the Golden Bears' 38-0 victory over Arizona in Tucson, Ariz., on Oct. 23. Cal (5-1) is headed toward its first New Year's Day bowl since the 1991 season.

national title game, the Bears expect to have a clear shot at the Rose Bowl — at least they hope so.

Even with five season-ending victories, the Bears don't know whether they'll be good enough to earn a BCS spot. There are still too many variables: Utah's computer rankings, Florida State's for-

tures or even a loss by the Trojans could damage the Bears' hopes.

"Every game is for the Rose Bowl, that's how we look at it," center Marvin Philip said. "It's tough, because that's our goal. You don't want to be out there every week thinking everything is riding on every play, but it's

hard to put that stuff in the back of your mind, too."

The players hear about their Rose Bowl chances from students and boosters. A few have tried to follow the BCS rankings in the newspaper, though defensive end Ryan Riddle only got a headache.

Riddle is among the players who long for a playoff system —

and a chance for a rematch with the ninth-ranked Utes, who beat Cal in Salt Lake City last year.

"Their schedule is pretty lackadaisical from here on out, and if they end up going undefeated, it's kind of sad that we wouldn't have a chance to play them," said Riddle, second in the Pac-10 with seven sacks. "I feel kind of bitter about that team, just because they beat us last year."

"As a fan of the game, I have my thoughts (about the BCS), but I personally believe they should have playoffs. [Utah] could end up going undefeated and not have a shot at the national championship. To me, that's a sign that something is wrong with the system."

All this uncertainty actually works out perfectly for coach Jeff Tedford, who claims to have no idea or interest in his school's spot in the national picture.

Cal isn't a perennial football power with a roster of elite high school All-Americans who expect to be in the national title hunt every year, so the novelty of the Bears' success could be intoxicating — but since it's so complicated, it's easier to keep his players focused on the next opponent.

"I don't know how you told all that stuff away from them," Tedford said. "I just know how we address them. I think that we're mature enough to know the difference enough to know that it's one week at a time. We don't ever look forward."

Mourning plays for first time since Dec. kidney transplant

BY TOM CANAVAN
The Associated Press

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Alonzo Mourning's first game back after a kidney transplant less than a year ago was a lot like the other 600-plus games in his NBA career.

"The only thing I can tell you is I felt his presence," Philadelphia 76ers center Samual Dalembert said. "I got a couple of blows to my mouth. It's going to be hard for me to eat tonight."

Showing remarkable endurance and strength in his first NBA game since getting a new kidney on Dec. 19, Mourning had 12 points and five rebounds in leading the New Jersey Nets to a 96-94 preseason victory over the 76ers on Thursday night.

Mourning ran the court well, shot well, rebounded and was a physical presence in the paint, giving the Nets a boost less than a week before their season opener against Shaquille O'Neal and the Miami Heat.

And Mourning appeared to be having fun, joking with Sixers guard Allen Iverson after being called for an offensive foul.

"I have been playing this game for over 20 years," a matter-of-fact Mourning said after the game. "It's just like riding a bike. You never forget. If you



New Jersey's Alonzo Mourning (33) had 12 points and five rebounds Thursday in the Nets' 96-94 exhibition victory over the Philadelphia 76ers. It was Mourning's first game since receiving a new kidney on Dec. 19, 2003.

haven't ridden one in three years, they throw one in front of you, you know what to do with it."

The 34-year-old Mourning showed what he meant just seconds after peeling off his sweat pants and reporting into the game with 6:15 left in the first quarter.

Mourning ran a pick-and-roll with Richard Jefferson, and it left him wide open near the foul line. Jefferson gave him the ball and Mourning swished a jumper.

The fans in sparsely filled Continental Airlines Arena, who had

given Mourning a standing ovation when he entered the game, cheered even more.

Mourning was supposed to play eight to 10 minutes, but he remarkably almost doubled that. Coach Lawrence Frank even asked him at one point in the second quarter if he was OK. Mourning smiled and said, "Yes."

Mourning, who played in a cheering call with 7:50 left in the game. The 12-year-veteran was 3-for-5 from the field and 6-for-10 from the line.

"I wasn't thinking of an individual type of satisfaction," Mourning said. "I do know a year ago playing preseason games was physically more of a struggle, and you don't realize that until now. Back then, I had learned to deal with fatigue."

Mourning, who got a new kidney from a cousin in December, said it is working perfectly and he is feeling much better.

"As far as my overall conditioning, it does need to be a little better," Mourning said. "At the same time, I think my recovery is doing a lot better because I have a new organ that is doing its job. That makes a world of difference."

Mourning said the only thing that will prevent him from playing is if his doctors tell him to stop or his body rejects his new kidney.

Mystics' Holdscaw battling depression

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Mystics star Chamique Holdscaw says she left the team in the middle of the WNBA season because of depression.

Holdscaw, then the league's second-leading scorer, stopped playing for the Mystics in July to deal with an undisclosed medical issue. She felt afraid and ashamed to discuss what was wrong with her, she told The Washington Post in her first interview since her departure.

"Depression, people just don't realize how it can take over your mind," said Holdscaw, the WNBA's No. 1 overall pick in 1999.

"Yes, I was walking around and looked fine."

She has been under a psychiatrist's care since becoming increasingly withdrawn, alienated from teammates and family and even her oldest confidantes, she said. She changed her cell phone number so that Washington general manager Pat Summitt, her former coach at Tennessee, couldn't reach her.

"I just kind of had to break away from all that," said Holdscaw, who added that she slept a lot. "I was just doing my own

thing, just living without all of the expectations."

The Mystics went on an improbable playoff run in her absence, winning five of their last six regular-season games before losing to Connecticut in the first round of the Eastern Conference playoffs.

Holdscaw said she never watched her teammates or any other sports on TV. She sat on the couch in her apartment just a block from the MCI Center.

"Everything was negative," she said. "Dark."

One Mystics fan confronted her in public about her absence, she said.

A passing motorist rolled down his window and began berating her, telling her, "You need to get it together! You need to get back on the court!"

Holdscaw responded angrily. "Do you know me?" she shouted. "You don't know me!"

Holdscaw missed seven of the Mystics' final eight games. The forward refused to discuss the reason for her absence, other than to rule out cancer, pregnancy and drug addiction.

In a statement issued last month by the team, Holdscaw said her condition is not life-threatening or career-threatening.

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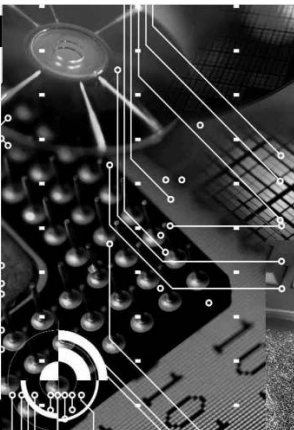
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Sluman's 62 leads PGA event in Fla.

The Associated Press

PALM HARBOR, Fla. — A few hours after Jeff Sluman finished his record-setting round, the scoreboard behind him on the putting green made it clear that no one was going to catch him.

Golf briefs

Sluman, 62, won the 9-under 62 in the Chrysler Championship. Before long, players walked by with their congratulations.

"Tell me you stopped after 16,"

Peter Jacobsen said.

Kevin Na took the belly putter from Sluman and said, "Why are you practicing?"

It's been a while since Sluman was the center of attention. It felt even longer since he has seen so many shots go where he was aiming, and so many punts disappear into the hole.

Sluman missed only one green Thursday, made nine birdies and never came close to a bogey in building a two-shot lead on the Copperhead course at Innisbrook that played nearly a half-shot over par. The previous course record was 63 by K.J. Choi in the opening round two years ago.

Jonathan Kay and Kent Jones — one guy trying to get into the Tour Championship, the other trying to keep his PGA Tour card — were at 64. Kay got there in style with a hole-in-one on No. 17, and finishing with a birdie.

Vijay Singh, who needs only a top 15 at Innisbrook to assure himself a \$10 million payday, had a 65.

The only thing Sluman lacked was an explanation. "It was one of those days that, because you're playing so well, it just seems easy," Sluman said. "And you kind of wonder to yourself why in the world you can't do that more often."

Sluman isn't stopping, but he is only No. 79 on the money list and one of the few guys who isn't on some kind of bubble in the final full-field tournament of the year.

Sunday will decide who gets into the Tour Championship (top 30 on the money list), the Masters (top 40) and who keeps their jobs next year (top 125).

That's why it was such a good start — and a great finish — for Kaye, who is 32nd on the money list \$32,000 behind the guy in 30th place. And it was even more important to Jones, who is 124th on the money list and showed up in Tampa some \$1,200 over Olin Browne at No. 125.

As NASCAR gets back to business, Busch leads the chase for the Cup

By PAUL NEWBERRY

The Associated Press

HAMPTON, Ga. — The NASCAR family paused for a few days to mourn.

Now it's back to business.

The seventh stop in NASCAR's championship chase is Atlanta Motor Speedway, where Kurt Busch will try to extend his lead over Jeff Gordon and Dale Earnhardt Jr. in Sunday's Bass Pro Shops MBNA 500.

Not that it's business as usual.

The sport was rocked last Sunday by the plane crash that killed the son, brother and twin nieces of prominent car owner Rick Hendrick. They were traveling to the track in Martinsville, Va., and the team plane slammed into the side of a mountain.

All 10 people aboard were killed, including the general manager of Hendrick Motorsports, the team's chief engine builder,

and a pilot for NASCAR driver Tony Stewart.

"There will be a somber feeling to things," said Busch, who holds a 96-point lead over Gordon with just four races remaining. "It's a tight-knit community, and we're all going to be here to support the Hendrick family."

NASCAR and at least one major sponsor will back on their promotional events during the week out of respect for the victims.

Candlelight vigils were held in North Carolina. But this is a sport that's accustomed to dealing with death, so calling off the next race was never an option.

All of Hendrick's drivers — Gordon, Jimmie Johnson, Terry Labonte and Brian Vickers — will be racing on the high-banked, 1.54-mile oval that usually produces the fastest speeds on the Nextel Cup circuit.

Gordon, a four-time champion,



Jeff Sluman, above, played Thursday on the Copperhead course at Innisbrook, which played nearly a half-shot over par. The previous course record of 63 was set by K.J. Choi in the first round two years ago.

Kirk Triplett made six birdies on his first three holes, cooling from there to join Jones and Kay at 64.

Justin Rose of England had a 65 and was tied with Singh.

Sluman has to win to play next week at East Lake or in April at Augusta National.

GARCIA, Lax share lead of Volvo Masters

SOTOGRADE, Spain — Sergio Garcia shot a 4-under-par 67 in windy conditions Thursday to share the first-round lead of the Volvo Masters with fellow Spaniard Jose Manuel Lara, who was stung by a bee early in his round.

Brian Davis and Alastair Forsyth were at 68, with Luke Donald, Peter O'Malley, Christian Caevar and Jonathan Lomas at 69. Colin Montgomerie, who won on this course in 1993 and shared the title with Bernhard Langer two years ago, shot 75.

Sluman isn't cut in this event that ends the European tour season. The European Order of Merit title, usually decided in this tournament, has been won by Ernie Els, who is not playing.

Koch, Park pace LPGA field in S. Korea

JEJU, South Korea — Karin Koch of Sweden and South Korea's Grace Park shot 6-under 66 on Friday, taking the lead after the first round of the LPGA's CJ Nine Bridges Classic.

Koch, looking for her second LPGA Tour victory, made four straight birdies to start her round.

Jill McGill of the United States and England's Karen Stupples shot 5-under 67.

Mexico's Lorena Ochoa, who had a hole-in-one on No. 13, shot 4-under 68.

is the team's best hope for a title in 2004, though Johnson has jumped up to fourth by winning the past two races.

The 26-year-old Busch is clearly in the driver's seat, poised to become the second-youngest champion in NASCAR's modern era. The only driver he can't surpass is Gordon, who was 24 when he won the first of his titles in 1995.

Earnhardt trails by 125 points, while Johnson is a whopping 207 points behind. Everyone behind Busch in the 10-man championship chase needs the leader to have a major meltdown.

For instance, if Gordon wins the last four races and picked up the maximum number of points, Busch would still claim the top one point if he averaged a fourth-place finish and led only one lap the rest of the way.

Earnhardt's title hopes took a major blow last week when he got caught up in a wreck and finished 33rd in the Subway 500.

Stern: Owners want relief from some long-term deals

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Defining one of the goals of owners in collective bargaining talks, NBA Commissioner David Stern said teams would like relief from long-term contract obligations to unproductive players.

The NBA's seven-year labor agreement expires after the upcoming season, and the league and players' union have been holding preliminary talks on a new deal the first since the sides went through a costly lockout that wiped out a large portion of the 1998-99 season.

Sounding a fairly optimistic tone, Stern said it was far too early in the process to even be speaking about the possibility of another lockout.

But he did give some insight into what's behind one of the owners' current proposals — cutting the maximum length of contracts from seven years to four.

"Owners, on balance, want to come up with system that's a bit more profitable than the existing system and doesn't reward players who are no longer in the league — or who shouldn't be in the league at higher prices," Stern said Thursday in a conference call with reporters.

Players setting contracts and not playing in the league is taking money from players who are in the league and are playing heavily. That's what gets us into discussions of shorter contracts," Stern said.

Stern met with ownership's negotiating committee earlier this week during the league's Board of Governors meeting, giving a brief overview of what parameters have been established in talks with the union.

The union is seeking greater freedom of movement for players, along with an end to the escrow tax system under which 10 percent of players' paychecks are withheld, and the luxury tax system that penalizes owners with the highest payrolls.

Stern also said he has asked for a 20-year-old age limit, with incentives provided to players who defer their draft eligibility to stay in college. The union says it adamantly opposes raising the current age limit of 18.

"There are lots of proposals and ideas going around. We remain committed to a process that guarantees the players a specific percentage of revenues," Stern said. "We're talking more about certain approaches as to redistributing money than we are about major efforts to clamp that money down."

NBA owners are also seeking a reduction in the size of annual raises given in long-term contracts. Currently, players can receive a 10 percent raise if they re-sign with their current team; 10 percent if they sign with a new team as a free agent.

Owners are also seeking a reduction in the starters' salary for the midlevel exception, which allows teams over the salary cap to free agents.

Sports briefs

Cavs decline option on Wagner

CLEVELAND — Guard Dajuan Wagner will become a free agent this season because the Cleveland Cavaliers declined their \$3.4 million contract option for 2005-06 from Friday.

The sixth overall pick in the 2002 draft, Wagner has shown flashes of being a productive player. He averaged 13.4 points in 47 games as a rookie and 6.5 last season in 44 games. He missed 33 games after knee surgery.

Wagner sprained his ankle during the preseason and might begin the regular season on the injured list.

Dotson ruled incompetent to stand trial in murder case

BAYOR, Texas — The former Baylor basketball player charged with murdering a teammate was ruled incompetent to stand trial on Thursday.

Carlton Dotson, 22, was sent by District Judge George Allen to a state mental hospital for up to four months until his competence will be re-evaluated.

Dotson could get life in prison if convicted of shooting Patrick Denney, who was missing for about six weeks before his body was found in 2003 in a field near Baylor's Waco campus.

Agassi cruises to semis in Stockholm

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Top-seeded Andre Agassi won his third straight set match in a row, advancing to the semifinals of the Stockholm Open on Friday.

The American veteran, who lost in the quarterfinals in 1989 and 1994 at the Globe Arena across town, beat Spain's Fernando Verstraigh 7-6 (4), 6-2 on the Royal Tennis Hall's fast Plexipave court.

Germany's Tommy Haas, the fourth seed, also made the final four, defeating Olivier Rochus of Belgium 6-3, 7-6 (4).

Haas will play Agassi in Saturday's semifinals.

Next year's Tour de France route tougher for Armstrong

PARIS — The 2005 Tour de France might give other riders their best chance to test Lance Armstrong, if he goes for a seventh straight Tour victory.

Organizers unveiled the 2005 Tour route, which runs from July 2-24, passes through Germany and features 21 stages over 2,222 miles.

The mountaintop finishes are less intense and the time trials shorter, possibly cutting into Armstrong's strengths.

Replacing the customary opening day prologue is an 11.8-mile time trial from Fromentiere to Noirmoutier-en-l'Île. Armstrong usually dominates clock races, and the short distance of the opening stage seems designed to minimize the gaps the Texan can open.

After DUI arrest, Redskins bench rookie safety Taylor

The Associated Press

ASHBURN, Va. — The tumultuous rookie season of Washington Redskins rookie Sean Taylor hit a new low in the early hours Thursday when he was arrested on a drunken driving charge.

The No. 5 overall draft pick from Miami then compounded his ordeal by keeping the Redskins guessing as to his whereabouts until he arrived at Redskins Park in the afternoon, well after the team's practice. He entered the building through a back door and met with coach Joe Gibbs.

Several hours later, the team released a one-sentence statement announcing that the 21-year-old safety would be inactive for Sunday's game against the Green Bay Packers. Gibbs was not available for comment after the meeting.

Taylor was stopped by a state trooper at about 2:45 a.m. EDT, on Washington's Interstate 495. Lt. Harry Newlin of the Virginia State Police said the officer suspected Taylor had been drinking. "He failed some field sobriety tests, was subsequently arrested for driving under the influence," Newlin said. "He refused a breath test, so he was charged with driving under the influence and refusal of a breath test."

Taylor was held for four hours in the Fairfax County Jail and released on a \$5,000 bond at 10 a.m. His mug shot shows him wearing a black T-shirt with two star-shaped earrings.

Taylor is due in court Dec. 1. A first offense is punishable by up to one year in prison and/or a \$2,500 fine. A conviction would also merit disciplinary action by the NFL.

Gibbs' only comments came

NFL injury update

Injuries to prominent NFL players, followed by team's prognosis for upcoming game:
Redskins RB Brian Westbrook (cracked rib) questionable.
Giants WR Amani Toomer (hamstring) questionable; C Shaun O'Hara (viral infection) questionable.
Jaguars RB Fred Taylor (quadiceps) questionable.
Ravens RB Jamal Lewis (suspension) questionable; Jonathan Ogden (hamstring) out; TE Todd Heap (ankle) doubtful.
Packers RB Lavender (hamstring) questionable; O John Hall (groin) out.
Vikings WR Randy Moss (hamstring) questionable.

while he was still waiting to hear from Taylor.

"It sounds like it's serious," Gibbs said. "And we'll kind of deal with it with what we think is best for the team."

But Taylor has made headlines for all the wrong reasons from the week he was drafted in April.

He left the NFL's mandatory rookie symposium early and was fined \$25,000. He showed up at his first minicamp wearing shorts that were so baggy they kept falling to his knees.

Taylor also fired his agent within days of the draft, and his contract negotiations were delayed because he took several months to hire a new one. When he finally found an agent, he signed a seven-year, \$19 million deal. After comparing his contract to those signed by other draftees, he fired his original one. He also boycotted the media for a few weeks.

Ogden signs seven-year contract with Ravens

BALTIMORE — All-Pro left tackle Jonathan Ogden signed a seven-year contract Thursday with the Baltimore Ravens, allowing the seven-time Pro Bowler to finish his career with the Ravens.

"I'm just glad it's done," Ogden said after signing the deal late

Thursday afternoon, according to the Ravens' Web site. "I don't have to think about it anymore, not that I was overly concerned about it."

Ogden will not play this week because of a pulled hamstring.

Eagles RB Levens to start for injured Westbrook

PHILADELPHIA — With leading rusher Brian Westbrook likely out of Sunday's game against Baltimore with a cracked rib, 34-year-old running back Dorsey Levens will start.

Levens never thought he'd get that chance again.

"I can't say that I did, honestly," Levens said Thursday. "At my age and position, it's just not a likely scenario at this time. But it's here and it's here to go."

It's Levens' first start since Dec. 16, 2001, in his final season with Green Bay. Levens had two 1,000-yard seasons from 1994-2001 and is fourth on the Packers' career rushing list.

He spent the 2002 season with the Eagles and had the worst season of his career last year with the Giants, averaging a career-low 2.9 yards per carry. Levens said he was ready to quit, but he continued to work out in case an opportunity to play arose.

Levens will face one of the top run defenses in the NFL. The Ravens are seventh in the league in run defense, allowing 100.3 yards per game and only 3.4 yards a carry.

"It's probably not the best timing in the world because it is a good defense, but the opportunity presents itself," Levens said.

Bears rookie Harris fined \$5,000 for late hit

LAKE FOREST, Ill. — Chicago Bears rookie defensive tackle Tommie Harris was fined \$5,000 for knocking Tampa Bay Buccaneers quarterback Brian Griese to the ground Sunday during a dead-ball situation.

Harris said Thursday he plans to appeal the fine, his second of the season.



Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis, above, attempted to lure Terrell Owens to Baltimore in the offseason. This week he said, "My way to heaven doesn't go through Terrell Owens, so I wish we'd stop bringing him up."

Philadelphia wide receiver Terrell Owens, above, refused to be traded to Baltimore during the offseason. The four-time Pro Bowler decided to be low-key this week, saying, "I'm just thankful that I'm here."

They meet again

Lewis, Owens avoid controversy before Ravens-Eagles matchup

By RO MAADDI
The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA — Visions of Terrell Owens coming across the middle have probably raced through Ray Lewis' mind all week.

The All-Pro linebacker hasn't admitted having such thoughts recently, but he sure isn't going to hold back if he gets a shot at Owens when the Baltimore Ravens visit the Philadelphia Eagles on Sunday.

The two friends became adversaries when Owens rejected the Ravens, forcing a trade to the Eagles less than two weeks after San Francisco initially sent the four-time Pro Bowl wide receiver to Baltimore last March.

Lewis and Owens had a few testy exchanges leading up to a preseason game in Philadelphia, beginning with Lewis warning Owens not to cross the middle. But both instant they're focused on the game this time.

"I look forward to anybody with an opposite-colored jersey coming over the middle. There's no more emphasis on T.O. than anybody else," Lewis said. "My way to heaven doesn't go through Terrell Owens, so I wish we'd stop bringing him up."

Owens would rather talk about his success with the Eagles, who are seeking the first 7-0 record in franchise history.

"I'm just thankful that I'm here," he said. "I knew that for me to be productive and play like the receiver that I know I can be, I had to be put in the right situation."

The loquacious Owens never made a secret of his desire to play with quarterback Donovan McNabb. But, he said for the first time this week that an "offensive" racial comment by Ravens General Manager Ozzie Newsome also persuaded him to spurn Baltimore.

In his recent autobiography, Owens wrote that Newsome told the wide receiver's agent that, "He was a black man from Ala-

bama just like TO" and that "sometimes a black man's gotta be slapped."

Owens made a statement on the first play against the Ravens in the exhibition game, racing past cornerback Gary Baxter and catching an 81-yard touchdown pass from McNabb.

With Deion Sanders joining Baxter and All-Pro cornerback Chris McAlister in Baltimore's secondary, Owens might have a tougher time going deep.

"He's a great receiver, so how can you not look forward to the matchup?" Baxter said. "It's nothing personal. He's just going to go out there and do his thing and do my thing and we'll all get on the same page."

Owens has 34 catches for 596 yards and eight touchdowns.

"He's having one of the great seasons in the league. It's going to be an interesting matchup," McAlister said. "If he gets behind us, he's going to score, so obviously, the goal is to keep him in front of you."

The Ravens (4-2) need to contain Owens and the rest of the Eagles' offense, because their depleted offense has trouble scoring.

Baltimore will be without All-Pro running back Jamal Lewis (suspension) and All-Pro tackle Jonathan Ogden (hamstring). They also likely won't have Pro Bowl tight end Todd Heap, who has been sidelined since the second week of the season with a sprained ankle.

Still, Baltimore's defense, led by Lewis, the cornerbacks and safeties Ed Reed and Will Delpy, is a formidable challenge for Philadelphia's offense. The Eagles' average of 28.5 points per game is second in the NFL. But no team has allowed fewer points (85) than the Ravens.

The Eagles' already thin running backs corps could be without Brian Westbrook, questionable with a cracked rib. Westbrook has 458 yards rushing, including two 100-yard games, and has 31 receptions for 249 yards. Veteran Dorsey Levens will start if Westbrook doesn't.



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Cubs analyst Stone won't return in '05

The Associated Press

CHICAGO — Longtime Chicago Cubs analyst Steve Stone announced Thursday he was leaving WGN-TV, less than one month after coming under fire for on-air comments he made criticizing the team.

"I regret I won't be calling another Cubs game on WGN-TV for the greatest fans in baseball, the fans of the Chicago Cubs," Stone, a Cubs broadcaster for 20 years, said on WGN-AM radio.

Stone told The Associated Press that WGN wanted to bring back next season. But after much deliberation, he said he reached a decision that was "probably best for all parties."

"I am not retired," Stone said. "I am going to spend the rest of my life in baseball. I just don't see any more of that which will be."

Stone, who joined the Cubs as a pitcher in 1974, won the Cy Young Award for Baltimore in 1980 when he went 25-7.

A telephone message left for a Cubs spokeswoman was not immediately returned Thursday night. WGN and the Cubs are both owned by Tribune Co., the parent of the Chicago Tribune.

Stone's partner Chip Caray also recently left WGN-TV to take a job calling games for the Atlanta Braves, joining his father, Skip, in the booth.

Some of Stone's comments this season led to a meeting Oct. 1 with Cubs president Andy MacPhail, general manager Jim Hendry and manager Dusty Baker after Stone questioned managerial strategy and criticized the team's approach during a postgame television show Sept. 30.

After that night on WGN radio, he also criticized the team for making excuses in a late-season loss that damaged their chances of making the playoffs.

"You want the truth. You can't handle the truth," Stone said at the time. "The truth of this situation is an extremely talented bunch of guys who want to look at all directions except where they should really look and kind of make excuses for what happened."

"At the end of the day, boys, not tell me how rough the water is, you bring in the ship."

Some of Stone's comments last season also angered several players, including reliever Kent Mercker who called the booth during one August game to complain.

Rangers reliever Francisco faces a lesser charge

OAKLAND, Calif. — Texas Rangers reliever Frank Francisco will face a misdemeanor assault charge rather than a felony for breaking a woman's nose when he threw a chair into the stands during a game.

"He has no record. He threw a plastic chair. It's not a gun. It's not a knife," Alameda County Senior District Attorney Gregory Norbert Chu said Thursday, explaining his decision.

While Francisco still faces a maximum three-year probation and one year in county jail, if convicted, he escaped the three years in state prison connected to a felo-



Briefs

ny conviction. A misdemeanor charge also means that Francisco does not have to appear in court for some proceedings, including the initial arraignment, Chu said.

Francisco threw the chair into the right-field box seats and hit two spectators in the head during a Rangers-Oakland Athletics game Sept. 13.

He hit Jennifer Bueno, whose husband, Craig, was part of a group of fans heckling the Rangers before the fracas.

Francisco was suspended for 15 games, which carries through the final game of the regular season. He still faces the possibility of a civil suit by the Buenos.

D.C. Council gets an earful on baseball at hearing

WASHINGTON — Hundreds of people shared their opinions on Mayor Anthony A. Williams' \$440 million baseball stadium proposal during a District of Columbia Council hearing that lasted more than 14 hours, stretching into Friday morning.

More than 230 individuals were scheduled to testify following presentations from city officials in a packed council chamber.

Baseball supporters were red ball caps with a "W." Opponents wore navy blue caps that read "Neighborhoods First."

There's more people here than an Expos game," quipped Councilman Adrian Fenty, D-Ward 4.

But the hearing turned serious quickly as members of the council laid out their arguments and grilled city officials on whether they had gotten the best deal from Major League Baseball. Councilman David Catania called it "the worst deal in America" and railed against the arguments of City Administrator Robert Roth and other mayoral appointees during the hearing. The mayor did not testify.

He found an ally in former mayor Barry Bora, who said he wanted a baseball team for D.C. but not at such a high cost and not on the Anacostia River waterfront.

"We shouldn't do it at any expense," Barry said. "Why should we subsidize these millionaires?"

Phillies interview Pendleton

PHILADELPHIA — Terry Pendleton, the Atlanta Braves' hitting coach the past three seasons, was interviewed by the Philadelphia Phillies on Wednesday for their vacant managerial position.

Jim Leyland, who managed Pittsburgh and Colorado, and Les Phillips, who led the Yankees to championships in 1997, will interview Pendleton on Monday, with no other candidates scheduled.

Former managers Don Baylor, Charlie Manuel, Grady Little, Buddy Bell and Jim Fregosi, and former Phillies first-round pick John Russell have been interviewed. Only Pendleton and Russell, a third-base coach for Pittsburgh, have no managerial experience in the majors.



Houston Astros center fielder Carlos Beltran (15), who hit a record eight home runs in the playoffs this season, will be one of the most coveted free agents on the market this offseason.

Beltran among 65 who file on first day of free agency

BY RONALD BLUM

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Carlos Beltran wasted no time in becoming a free agent.

After hitting eight homers for the Houston Astros to tie the post-season record, the speedy center fielder was among 65 players who filed for free agency Thursday on the first possible day, just hours after Boston completed its historic sweep of St. Louis in the World Series.

Acquired during the season from Kansas City, Beltran has said he would consider re-signing with the Astros if they keep the core of the team together.

"I experienced being on a team where they don't do anything to help the ballclub," Beltran said. "One of my priorities if I stay with this ballclub will be keeping the young guys... our young players have potential to be real good."

Beltran, who is represented by Scott Boras, could get the biggest deal of the offseason.

Dodgers third baseman Adrian Beltré, who led the major leagues with 48 home runs, also filed along with Dodgers outfielder Steve Finley. Beltré, also a Boras client, had arthroscopic surgery Thursday to remove two large bone spurs from his left ankle.

"Obviously there's a lot of interest in those guys," Boras said. "We're getting a lot of calls, so we thought we'd file."

Toronto first baseman Carlos Delgado, Chicago White Sox outfielder Magglio Ordonez, Minne-

sota right-hander Brad Radke and Philadelphia right-hander Kevin Millwood also filed Thursday.

The Red Sox have 17 players among the more than 200 potentially eligible for free agency, a group that includes Pedro Martinez, Derek Lowe, Jason Varitek and Orlando Cabrera. Backup outfielder Gabe Kapler was the only player to file Thursday. Players may file through Nov. 11 and start negotiating money with any of the other 29 teams the following day.

Cardinals right-hander Chris Carpenter, sidelined since mid-September because of nerve damage in his right biceps, filed conditionally. St. Louis must decide whether to exercise a \$2.2 million option for 2005.

Florida right-hander Carl Pavano and Philadelphia left-hander Eric Milton are among the other starting pitchers eligible to file.

Preliminary talks figure to start Nov. 8, when general managers gather for a week of meetings in Key Biscayne, Fla. The New York Yankees ended three days of high-level meetings in Tampa, Fla., on Thursday as they prepared for the offseason.

After becoming the first team to waste a 3-0 lead in a postseason series and lose to Boston in the AL Championship Series, New York may restart trade talks with Arizona for Randy Johnson.

"Make no mistake about it. We are hard at work and will be loyal with a strong team for our local New York Yankee fans," owner

George Steinbrenner said in a statement.

The Chicago Cubs made two moves Thursday. They declined an \$11.5 million mutual option on outfielder Moises Alou, choosing to pay a \$2.5 million option, and also declined a \$2.5 million option on second baseman Mark Grudzielanek, paying him a \$250,000 buyout.

White Sox outfielder Carl Everett exercised his \$4 million option, and Chicago exercised a \$2.5 million option on closer Shingo Takatsu. The White Sox declined their \$1 million option on catcher Sandy Alomar Jr., paying him a \$50,000 buyout instead.

Craig Biggio's \$3 million option was exercised Thursday by the Astros, who declined Jeff Kent's \$9 million option and will pay the second baseman a \$700,000 buyout.

However, general manager Gerry Hunsicker said the team "made it clear to him that we had interest in signing down with him and bringing him back under another contract scenario."

The Colorado Rockies and Jeremy Burnitz both declined his \$3 million mutual option, and the outfielder will get a \$250,000 buyout.

Cleveland right-hander Scott Lorton, who was eligible for free agency, agreed to an \$850,000, one-year contract.

There was one curious name among those who filed: New York Mets first baseman Mo Vaughn, out most of the past two seasons with an arthritic left knee, who completed an \$80 million, six-year contract, filed to get off the Mets' 40-man roster.

Cardinals limp into offseason after defeat

Injuries, poor hitting derailed team that led majors with 105 victories

By R.B. FALLSTROM
The Associated Press

ST. LOUIS — No one summed up the St. Louis Cardinals' failure in the World Series better than Scott Rolen.

"When you have the aspiration as a little kid of playing in the World Series, throwing the ball up and hitting it, you at least sneak one hit in there in your backyard," Rolen said.

After a season in which the Cardinals led the majors with 105 victories, their potent lineup went down meekly in a four-game sweep to the Boston Red Sox.

Rolen, the major's RBIs leader before straining his left calf on Sept. 11, went 0-for-15 during the Series. The rest of the team didn't do much better, hitting .190 and going 4-for-28 with runners in scoring position. Jim Edmonds, who batted fifth behind Rolen, was 1-for-15 with no RBIs.

"We're disappointed the season didn't turn out the way we wanted, but on the other hand we had a great season and have nothing to hang our heads about," Game 4 starter Jason Marquis said.

The Cardinals cruised to the NL Central title, only slowing in mid-September when Rolen and starter Chris Carpenter went down with injuries.

Carpenter never returned and Rolen slumped after he came back, but manager Tony La Russa refused to make excuses.

"What-if thinking, that's so counterproductive," La Russa said Thursday as players cleared their lockers at Busch Stadium.

No one felt the sting of the loss more than Carpenter. He won 15 games in a brilliant comeback season after having missed 20 months while recuperating from two shoulder operations, and would have been the team's top starter in the playoffs had he not



St. Louis Cardinals third baseman Scott Rolen, who struggled with the bat after straining his left calf on Sept. 11, was hitless in 15 at-bats in the World Series as the Cardinals were swept by the Boston Red Sox.

been lost with nerve damage to his right biceps on Sept. 18 — the day the Cardinals clinched the division.

Without him, only one of the four starters lasted long enough to qualify for a win in the Series.

Now, Carpenter has got to go home to New Hampshire, not far

from Boston, and hear all winter about how the Red Sox ended the Curse of the Bambino at the expense of the Cardinals.

"I definitely did not want to be the one going home and listening to everybody talk about how they beat us," Carpenter said. "It's a small world at home and I'm

going to hear a lot of it. I don't want to deal with that."

The Cardinals head into a shorter than usual offseason facing the usual list of personnel questions.

Shortstop Edgar Renteria can become a free agent and re-signing him is one of the team's top priorities.

Pitcher Matt Morris, the Opening Day starter the last three seasons, had a staff-high 4.72 ERA this year and almost certainly will be lost to free agency.

The team has an option on Woody Williams, the de facto No. 1 in the playoffs because of Carpenter's injury and Morris' inconsistency, but is likely to try re-signing him at a lower price.

Williams was 11-8, the fewest victories on the rotation, but the Cardinals won 16 of his last 19 regular-season starts and he won twice in the playoffs. He's 38, but wants to pitch at least a few more years and would like to stay in St. Louis, where he's enjoyed a career renaissance.

"Most definitely," Williams said.

One of the rotation openings likely will go to Dan Haren, who impressed the team in spot starts during the regular season and in middle relief in the postseason.

Rick Ankiel also could be in the hunt for a starting job after returning from reconstructive elbow surgery in the final month of the season.

Reliever Steve Kline is scheduled to have surgery Nov. 11 to repair a partially torn tendon his left index finger, an injury that got him bounced from the World Series roster. He also can be a free agent and believes the team does not want to re-sign him.

One vacancy they won't have to fill is manager. La Russa can resign Thursday that he'll be back for 10th season.

Bill DeWitt Jr., the team's general partner and chairman of the board, said after Wednesday's Game 4 loss that he considered this La Russa's best season in St. Louis.

"I thought it was, I really did, and I told him so," DeWitt said. "I thought he did a wonderful job."

Repeat: Can Red Sox maintain chemistry despite free agency?

REPEAT, FROM BACK PAGE

"Already we're thinking in terms of what it's going to take to defend our championship," Henry said when the team bus arrived at Fenway on Thursday morning after the flight from St. Louis.

Nong, though, compares to their entire lives, they never gave up," Henry said. "As we drove in the buses with a police escort, traffic was stopped everywhere, people were out of their cars. Just sheer joy, the release of all this yearning to win a world championship is just a great thing to see, to be a part of."

Martinez has a good relationship with Henry, and he has until Nov. 11 to declare free agency.

"It really is too early, way too early" to discuss that, said Fernando Cuza, Martinez's agent. "The guys just landed and some may be hung over."

Inside Fenway, which opened the same week in 1912 in which the Titanic sank, workers washed the concourses. On the field, the World Series logo remained on the grass behind home plate and the first- and third-base lines were given a new coat of white paint in case the field is needed for team photos.

Since the Red Sox lost Game 7 of last year's AL Championship Series to the Yankees, Epstein has found ways to get them over that hump — adding stars and role players.

He hired a manager, Terry Francona, who he thought may have been too nice but ended up a perfect fit for a bunch of oddly coded misfits who played with joy. And Francona beat manager-

al luminaries Joe Torre and Tony La Russa along the way.

He traded a star shortstop, Nomar Garciaparra, who was too sullen for the goody clubhouse. But he had been such a big part of the franchise that his teammates voted him a full playoff share.

Epstein put together a middle infield of Orlando Cabrera, errorless in 14 postseason games, and Bellhorn, whose two-run homer into Pesky's Pole in right field in the eighth inning won the World Series opener 11-9.

But neither is a lock to return. Cabrera can become a free agent and Bellhorn, is signed only through this season.

Martinez is the biggest name and didn't hurt his bargaining position by allowing three hits in seven scoreless innings in Boston's 4-1 victory in Game 3, perhaps his last outing in a Red Sox uniform.

"I said I hope it's not the last

one," said Martinez, who would have to accept less than this year's \$17.5 million salary to stay.

"But if it is, I just want the fans and everybody to understand that I did whatever possible to represent the city well, the team, and that my heart will always be with them."

The three-time Cy Young award winner was 16-9, his most losses since 1996, with a career-high ERA of 3.90. But he was healthy all season and didn't miss a start.

Lowe struggled and finished at 14-12 with a 5.42 ERA. But he was the winning pitcher in the clinching games of the AL Division Series, AL Championship Series and World Series. He also got the save in the deciding fifth game of last year's playoffs against Oakland.

"When you think you're down as far as you can go, I kept getting back up," said Lowe, who increased his market value with his

playoff performance, a price the Red Sox might be reluctant to pay.

Lowe made \$5 million this year. Vartek earned \$6.7 million and both are represented by Scott Boras, who likes his clients to test the free-agent market.

For now, the Red Sox are champions for the first time in 86 years.

So on Thursday, Tom Wilson, 44, of Falmouth, stood in the line for souvenirs at a store where, interestingly, the last four digits of his phone number are 8686. He wore a Red Sox cap, a tie whose print was full of baseballs and a blue suit.

"I'm not going back until I get large quantities of shirts and hats, 48 caps, 48 shirts," he said. "I'm going to take a couple of items and put them on gravestones of people who didn't get to see this."

Get me a little you can say. "My only fear," he said, "is that the Yankees will buy our players."

SPORTS



Alonzo Mourning plays in first game since getting new kidney in December, Page 27

Repeat business

World Series champs face tough personnel decisions

BY HOWARD ULMAN

The Associated Press

BOSTON — The line at the souvenir store curved around the corner, about the length of a Mark Bellhorn homer into Pesky's Pole.

Thousands of fans yearned to wear the words "Boston Red Sox" and "World Series Champions" on the same shirt. One of them wasn't sure what he wanted on the back.

"If I knew Varitek would stay, I'd get his authentic jersey, so maybe I'll get Schilling or Ortiz instead," said Chris McDevitt, a 30-year-old accountant who once worked in concessions at Fenway Park.

On Thursday, smiling customers with long shopping lists didn't seem to mind they had slept too little after the Red Sox won the World Series for the first time since 1918, finishing a sweep of the St. Louis Cardinals on Wednesday night. The fans also didn't mind standing in line just across narrow Yawkey Way from the stadium where the messageboard read: "Welcome Home 2004 World Champions."

But when the euphoria and disbelief subsides, they'll wonder who will play on the team as it tries to defend the title.

David Ortiz is signed through 2006, Curt Schilling through 2007 and Manny Ramirez through 2008.

But Pedro Martinez, Derek Lowe and Jason Varitek can become free agents along with 15 less valuable players.

General manager Theo Epstein will have to prove himself again and team owner John Henry will have to come up with the money. This year's payroll of \$128 million was second only to the New York Yankees' \$186 million.

With the World Series victory, a bonus in Schilling's contract increases his 2005 salary from \$12.5 million to \$14.5 million and guarantees his 2007 club option at \$13 million.

SEE REPEAT ON PAGE 31



One player the Red Sox won't have to worry about right away is David Ortiz, who is signed through 2006.

AP



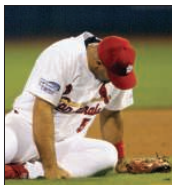
No. 22 Hokies rally in fourth quarter to sting Yellow Jackets

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Let the bidding begin: 65 players to enter baseball's free-agent market

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Fearsome during regular season, Cards went quietly in World Series

Page 31

Potential losses: Four who could leave via free agency



Derek Lowe: Went 14-12 with a 5.42 ERA during the regular season, but was the winning pitcher in the division series, ALCS and World Series clinchers. His playoff performance means he'll get a raise, in Boston or elsewhere.



Orlando Cabrera: Came to the Red Sox from the Expos in the Nomar Garciaparra trade and stood out at shortstop. The potential free agent didn't make an error in 14 postseason games, and hit safely in 10 straight.



Pedro Martinez: Three-time Cy Young winner was 16-9 with a 3.90 ERA this season. His stats are off from his best seasons in Boston, meaning he'll probably have to take less than this year's \$17.5 million salary to return.



Jason Varitek: Like Lowe, is a client of agent Scott Boras, which means they likely will test the market. Thought by some to be Boston's MVP this season, the team is likely to make every reasonable effort to keep him.

Ravens' Lewis, Eagles' Owens focus on game, not controversy Page 29